

Pioneer English Series : I

SECOND LEADERS
FROM THE Statesman

HIMALAYA PUBLICATIONS .
————— PATNA —————

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A Magnetic Mine.

THE development of human personality has in these days a definite economic importance. Where it is the immediate task of so many to obtain profitable employment, and thereafter to dispose to the public of goods often undesired and sometimes undesirable, the advantages in terms of sales value of a magnetic and forceful personality are evident. Demand creates its own supply, and accordingly this office frequently receives for notice hand-books, more or less detailed and technical, whose object is to inculcate in the reader the necessary forcefulness and drive. The particular example before us is a positive magnetic mine of information. With its aid the reader will be able to cultivate a "magnetic eye," a "magnetic handshake" and a vast number of other magnetic accessories. With their aid what employer or customer could fail to be impressed ?

Of course all these things cannot be obtained without labour; but those desirous of positions of emolument in this world (and doubtless thrones in the next) will not be daunted by

a little hard work. Moreover the exercises may be familiar from other walks of life. There is among schoolboys a game known as "staring out," the object of which it is to fix one's opponent with a hard unblinking stare until such time as he fails to meet one's gaze or dissolves in mirth. Here is a very evident example of human personality in conflict with a presumed hostile environment. The game has accordingly been adapted for impressing employers and customers. Those who lack proficiency in the art are given progressive training in staring, first at a black spot on a piece of paper, then at their own reflections in a mirror, and finally when these obstacles have been surmounted, at the face of their prospective employer. That he should dissolve in mirth, on the other hand, is neither expected nor desired, but rather that he should "do the needful" in the matter of employment.

While the emphasis of the book is chiefly upon what might be called the electro-telepathic facts of life, these are not exclusively its concern. It covers in addition a very varied range of allied subjects, including auto-suggestion and self-hypnosis. These latter practices are of very

general application. As Robert Briffault remarks somewhere, "the Australian blackfellow when forced to leave his encampment at midnight—in his opinion the most foolhardy thing he could be called upon to do—will declare roundly that it is broad daylight. In much the same manner the Chicago Chamber of Commerce will declare that 'prosperity is just around the corner'." This shrewd and sensible attitude is shared by the author of the manual before us. For what are unpleasant facts that we should permit ourselves to be bullied by them? The world is what we make it and if we resolve to make it an unending market for commodities on a commission basis the laws of economics, like the sales resistance of housewives, will melt before us.

Nor are the powers which such a course of self-training will confer confined to the public and commercial fields; they can be applied with even greater effect in private life. "Imagine that a person is standing near a book which is farther from you. You wish to read it. Sit absolutely still, and say in a commanding voice, 'Give me that book'." The command can, if necessary, be softened "by adding the word 'please' in a voice full of friendliness and gratitude." After a course

of exercises of this nature one is not surprised to read that "as you come across other persons you will find that you hold a certain power over them." A "trainee" so equipped would indeed be one to be reckoned with; indeed at his coming strong men might well quail.

Too Smooth to Please.

BEARDS, like dragons and crowned heads, are fewer than they were. In many countries the tide has set against them, and women's preference, we suppose, has something to do with this. Artists and ancient scientists alone in some lands are regarded as entitled to conceal the outlines of the face by refusing to shave. Beards have their uses at times, but it is nonsense to imagine that they remove all anxieties; even the professor with white beard to his waist, wide from shoulder to shoulder, has been known to feel uncomfortable at an evening party where all others wore a white tie but he a black.

We do not know whether anyone has compiled a treatise on the law, statute and common, relating to the beard. Peter the Great had a law about them, by which he taxed them. Finance Ministers in search of revenue might take the hint; a tax on the beard, with special penalties for those who shave regularly, might avert the deficits that are now familiar. If there is a treatise on the law about beards, an appendix will be necessary when it is next printed. For

at Bombay a man has taken his beard to a court of law. More accurately, we should say that what he has taken into court is his smooth chin. Married in proper form according to his faith, he has because unbearded been refused recognition as a married man by the religious head of his own small community; his personal law, he has been told, required a beard as an attribute of the married state; at present his wife has a husband who does not exist, if we may so put it.

From religious authority he has appealed to judicial authority, claiming damages for the disrespect shown to his smooth face as well as a declaration that he is a husband and she'a wife. The ancient scriptures are full of stories of men who got into trouble through disrespect of beards as phenomena. Beards as noumena, as adornments that exist only in the thought and have not emerged into the world of matter, have not yet contributed much to literature, history or law.

Ways and Means.

THERE is a new paragraph for the social historian to add to his chapter on *hartals*. They take many forms, and philologists do not appear to know how a *hartal* should be defined, what it should include, whence the word comes. But all India knows vaguely what is expected when people set out on *hartal*. The Kolis in Bhavnagar State are not at all vague. They have decided to have a *hartal* after their own heart, but whether the male heart, the female heart, or both, we are not wise enough to say. What has been decided by the Koli witenagemot is that as a protest against the arrest of Congress leaders all marriages shall be suspended this year. We are not sure what the Koli year is, nor their marriage season, therefore we cannot estimate what amount of self-denial there is in this restraint, nor what pressure it will apply to the Viceroy's Council. We gather from the tone of the Press message, which says that "the Koli community has decided to suspend all the marriages," that the agreement was two-sided and not merely a piece of lordly

male wisdom and determination. If it were only that it could soon be undermined.

Mahatma Gandhi, in one of his early promises of Swaraj, suggested, we think, a similar self-denial for all India as a means to impress the Government. Men and women rallied to the rest of his programme, but few to that. In England once an excited young woman, in the days of agitation for women's votes, proposed at a meeting that no British woman should listen to a proposal of marriage until all British women had the vote. A very cold chill passed over the audience; no one seconded her, nor is it on record that she followed her own advice. People have been known to marry, or not to marry, for a large variety of reasons; for love, ambition, wealth, place, obedience, duty, spite. We cannot remember any other people who have succeeded in putting the institution aside for a while as a part of a political campaign. Whatever will the Kolis do with their spare time when the season for marriages comes round? And it is not fair to disappoint the children of their expected treats.

Names Proper and Improper.

IT is a primitive form of humour to call a thing by its opposite, or by something else. "The sky is blue," says the mother. "No, it's red," says the toddler with a gurgle of enjoyment. Much of the jesting of primitive peoples is of this type. Somewhat similar in appearance, though different in purpose, is the practice of calling an evil good. It is supposed to conciliate evil powers who might be offended by a tactless use of truth. So the Greeks, as intelligent a race as ever lived, called the Furies the Eumenides, kindly Ones : the Pontus (Black) Sea the Friendly Sea because it was a home of dangerous storms. Names indiscreetly given may do a lot of harm.

They have been talking about this at Jajau, at a meeting of the Rajputana Reformers' League. Ridiculous names and tongue-twisting names should be banned, urged an earnest reformer. It is all very well for parents and relatives to indulge their fancies, but what of the poor children when they grow up ? Their lives can be made miserable by the defective taste or inadequate foresight of those who choose their names. This is true of

many parts of the world's surface besides Rajputana, and the injury is not always inflicted to please uncle or aunt in hope of a legacy. Some names are given only for pleasure in cruelty, it would seem. We shall not mention them; they will occur to readers. Others are chosen in the spirit of hazardous speculation. Violet may grow up to weigh thirteen stones, Jasmine to be the reverse of fragrant in her behaviour.

The Jajau meeting was not concerned with what follies British parents commit when choosing names. They were particular, not catholic, in their discussion. Why, they wondered, should children be called Zalim Singh (wicked lion), Bhola (simpleton) and the like. Should they not when old enough to feel for themselves be permitted to change their names with the sanction of the Government? We think they should if the name justifies the action; nor do we think the privilege should be confined to the growing children of Rajputana. Why should not a young Marmaduke become a Peter if he wants to, or a young Angelina Marguerite a Jane or Ann? Not only would we support proposals for making this possible. We would gladly see permanent courts established where benches

(composed of the proper proportions of Hindus, Moslems, Europeans, Scheduled Castes and all other minorities) could grant damages on the application of sufferers against parents or relatives who had imposed on them unsuitable and discomforting names.

In Germany the names that may be given have been decided by the State. That is oppression of another kind. Manu, it is true, laid down rules for girls' names ; they must be melodious, end in one or other of the vowels, recall a flower or creeper or goddess, and so on. He did not go beyond fundamental principles of guidance, and so has been permanently influential. In most countries ministers of religion exercise a gentle influence. Thus a story has been told of a curate who refused indignantly to christen a child Venus and gave her the unpagan name of Mary, only to find later that she was a boy and intended to be Sylvanus. Another method of giving sound instruction about names is set out in the story of the vicar who announced a christening for the afternoon. "If Mrs. Smith really intends to have her girl christened Mary Emmeline Marne Ypres Loos Passchendaele Verdun Plugstreet, I hope she will make a point of being punctual."

Names were only part of the interesting fare for the reformers. One resolution called for life-long celibacy among the youth of India so that they could serve the country. We do not know whether it was unanimously adopted. Certainly if universally acted on it would have remarkable consequences. Service to the country appears however to have been only half of the explanation why it was put forward, the other half being the desire to keep women from encroaching into men's preserves "in the name of equal rights and privileges." It would be one way, though a cowardly one, of realizing that aim.

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Nosing out Character.

THOSE who from hard necessity or choice are given to early rising must have noticed a steady diminution in the morning light. One result of the sun's seasonal lethargy¹ is that we shave in comparative gloom or by artificial illumination. No one but the eccentric takes joy in this violent beginning to a day. Most of us, as we somnolently survey the stricken field, are moved to the impatient query: why this trial by ordeal? It is to take refuge in "second causes scattered" to say that fashion has decreed it so. Those not ashamed to admit it to themselves know that by daily backing and slashing at their faces we pay supine obeisance at the shrine of that superstition that has made the chin the yardstick of character. Courage, resolution, power, all are by the authority of this legend centred in the individual with the prognathous jaw. The man whose chin juts out like the toe of an infantryman's boot wins instant admiration; the unfortunate whose chin is an apologetic lump in his throat inspires only derision. We envy the ape for his plenty. Has not the first of

dictators the biggest jaw in Italy? Who ever heard of a hero of fiction with a receding chin? As well look for a heroine with cross-eye.

Now this emphasis on the chin as the most revealing feature in the human countenance is arbitrary. There is no reason why a stiff upper lip should surmount a formidable chin. Nobody has found any use for it other than that it is a favourite point of contact or aspiration between pugilists. Left untended it sprouts a beard. There's the rub. In arctic climes, a capillose chin may serve to keep out the cold, but in milder climates it encourages impostures. The lower jaw, as a mark of character, is, in short, too easily disguised. Cain's mark was put upon his forehead. It is not for nothing that popular fancy has never associated the original bomb-throwing nihilist with a clean-shaven chin. Rasputin would have been half the devil he was painted without his beard.

It is high time, then, we made another feature the index of human excellence. The nose, for example. Many a worthy man whose chin is hard to find has a nose that sticks fearlessly out as sharp as a pen, bold and clear for all to see. It was Byron who said he found the mouth

as sharp as a pen, bold and clear for all to see. It was Byron who said he found the mouth more expressive than the eyes. The genius's relations with society might have been happier had somebody argued with him the easy case for the nose. There is no shape this noble protuberance cannot assume to reflect the gamut of human emotions. What colours endow it with tone and meaning !

Nose Nose Nose Nose

And who gave thee that jolly red nose ?

Sinament and Ginger, Nutmegs and Cloves,

And that gave me my jolly red nose !

And let us not forget the story of the young Chinese swineherd, Bo-bo, that first of incendiaries, who but for his nose upturned—

Wide into the murky air

Sagacious of his quarry from so far

would never have discovered for posterity the delights of mild and dulcet crackling. The nostrils of a horse are an indication of its mettle; why not his nose the temper of homo sapiens ? There is no disguising its message. Not even Macbeth's witches could grow beards upon their noses.

Helping out Nature.

XENEPHONE, the Greek, in a charming book on household economy animadverts on the fashion, as it seems to have been even then, of whitening the skin with powders. Someday, he assured a young woman, her husband would find her out, and what then? Husbands are not what they were. No modern wife with a freshly powdered nose is nervous when her husband comes home. Jezebel was not the first to redden her cheeks. Tutanka-men's pretty queen had her rouge pots buried with her. And Eve, it is rumoured, learned what a difference the application of a little fruit juice, naturally tinted, made to a poor woman. Queen Victoria and her strict companions turned the tide in England for a time, and probably women guests at Balmoral who wished to feel fresh and powdered did so in their rooms, as men who wished to smoke smoked up the chimney. Since the last war woman has emancipated herself from many restraints and inhibitions. She powders her nose and pinks her cheeks at dinner

table or in public meeting, and cares no whit who sees her.

Cosmetics are a necessity for most of the sex, which means for husbands that the cost of living has gone up considerably. Cosmetics and beautifying in all its forms have grown into a large industry. A 1935 return for Great Britain gave the annual expenditure on cosmetics as about £22,000,000 of which about a third was put to the account of soap, tooth powders and similar mundane utilities. Of the £14,000,000 spent on cosmetics proper, 90 per cent was spent by women, which averages to roughly £1 per head per year. But an average in this sphere tells us nothing. A quarter of a century earlier the country's total expenditure on these works of Satan, as they were then, was less than £ 1,000,000.

But if woman by the development of her habits presses more and more on her partner's earnings, she more and more provides the demand that makes those earnings possible. Not only is the production and distribution of cosmetics a great modern industry. Flapjacks, vanity bags, bottles and cases, must also have been a vigorous stimulus to industry and commerce in all civilized

countries, that is in all countries where women are up-to-date. Nor should it be overlooked what these adornments have done for the human mind. In men the efforts to prevent their wives from spending too much on them has led to a general sharpening of the intellectual faculties, and in women unflagging experiment in adjusting them to every variety of climate, weather, light and locality has had the same effect. There are cosmetics for the seaside, the grouse moor, the dance room, and the bathing pool. Women will search far for what they want, but, says a recent writer, they will not bargain over cosmetics, bargain hunters as by nature they are. Manufacturers second their efforts. They do their best to give women the tints and tones they want at any cost.

What of the war? Will it slow down progress? Will women be as keen on shades for cheeks and lips and finger and toe nails when the evenings are black and amusement is scarce and clothes are uniform or approximate thereto? Will women use their lipsticks as men when economizing do their cigars to the bitter end, instead of beginning a new one when there is still an inch to go? Will new cosmetics come into

fashion that can hastily be applied when enemy aeroplanes are announced? From the social history of the past twenty years we may feel convinced that whatever checks the war may impose the belief that art should help out nature will be stronger than ever when the fighting is done. Woman's right to powder her nose, with any colour, seems assured for ever.

Death of a Miser.

FROM accounts in contemporaries of the death of a miser who was the third generation of his family to earn that description we learn that the triple succession is regarded as rare. For this popular belief we do not know the evidence, but it is a comforting belief, since one in any family is more than enough. An English proverb common in the industrial north is "shirtsleeves to shirtsleeves in three generations," or in Lancashire "clogs to clogs," but the reference in those is rather to hard workers and spendthrifts than to misers and wasters. Another saying in India, that is of great antiquity, is that "the eighth is always a boy," with which his considerate clerks once consoled a Clive Street magnate depressed by the arrival of his sixth daughter.

The miser whose death is announced lived without style or comfort. 'Once in a fit of expansion he bought a shirt, it is alleged, but, quickly recovering his poise, sold it next day by auction. It would have been in keeping if he made a profit. Is there not an old poem about the king

who, bidden by his doctor to sleep in a happy man's shirt as cure for a malady, made search, to find that the one and only happy man in his dominions had no shirt? We do not know what our up-country miser's outlook on the world was, but his pleasure in doing without must have had something in common with the ascetic's, and only economists have condemnation for the ascetic. In general the miser stands for a point of view. He is not as other men, for while he accumulates wealth he does not allow other commodities to possess him; when he wishes to move house he can silently steal away like the Arab, without worrying about heavy side-board or grand piano or collection of oil-paintings. And he can always, if he wishes, find pleasure in the thought that whereas other men sadden somebody when they die his going is more likely to make everyone happy. Even a Government smiles then as it looks up the tables of succession and legacy duties.

Literature has its famous misers, and the word "harpagon" sticks. So has history. Guy of hospital fame was one; he stored and stinted to good purpose. Sir Harvey Elwes finds a place in the biographical dictionaries; he never

spent more than £ 110 a year and died worth a quarter of a million. His sister-in-law inherited £ 10,000 a year and starved to death rather than use it. His son, brewer and M. P., never bought clothes, never had his shoes cleaned, and grudged every penny spent on food. Some years ago obituary notices told of a member of the Civil Service in India who, in long career in which he rose to be Lieutenant-Governor of his province, never stood anyone a drink or cigarette or meal, as L. G. lived on a fraction of his sumptuary allowance and saved all his pay giving no parties or dinners or lunches or donations or trophies, and died in old age, "worth" an incredible fortune, as our trick of speech puts it. There may be men and women with large unused hoards to-day. Rumours are occasionally heard in India of men who have sacks of rupees in their cellars which never see the light. If so, the Red Cross or East India or other War Fund could tell them that there is a war on and that rupees can do a great deal of good if brought into the light.

Early in the Morning.

TO many people at this time of year an early morning walk is as the staff of life. It shakes off cobwebs from the mind and supports the body in resistance to heat, humidity, dust-storms and the vexations of the daily round. In parks and open spaces, along highways and in groves a great army of morning walkers appear all over India soon after dawn ; men and women bent not on business but on healthful pleasure. War-time demands have reduced their number, for A.R. P. and other forms of training also use the hours of freshness. Yet feet seeking the youthful sun are still many. This is a habit that few willingly give up.

English literature has delightful things to say about going a journey, and many of them could, appropriately, be repeated about morning walks. Hazlitt liked to go by himself : nature was company enough for him. Laurence Sterne's disposition inclined him to the opposite. A similar divergence may be seen among morning walkers. Some like to pad alone

across the carpets that summer's gaudy trees make with their blossoms : others of a gregarious nature have the habit of joining talk to perambulation. That this should turn on business is frowned on by the best writers, but often happens, to the loss, surely, of those who make so poor a use of morning sweetness and light. The spirit most akin to the time of day is the poet's : yet few are able, while tramping humidly along cantonment roads, to convert the landscape into a Pindaric ode, a capacity with which Hazlitt 'credits Coleridge. Nevertheless it is perhaps because ordinary mundane topics are felt to be unsuitable that many silences fall on walking couples.

Most people show themselves creatures of habit in these early hours. Some, their neighbours assert, have not for fifteen years varied the direction they take or the limits they keep. These are commonly walkers who think hard as they step out. Here too divergences are to be observed in every town and mofussil station. Some walkers prefer softness under foot, picturesqueness before the eyes and birds' melody in their ears. Others of more austere taste tread unyielding roads or direct themselves towards ancient ruins that insensibly lead the mind to

sober reflections. A seat on weather-beaten stone in such surroundings gives opportunity for thought on the vanity of human wishes. That is often a welcome thought on a hot summer's day when work is tedious and the ubiquitous dove repeats its sleepy refrain.

But in small compass it would be impossible even to summarize the variety of experiences that men and women walkers have on April, May and June mornings. Every sentence in literature's praise of going a journey suggests similarities in the lesser undertaking of a morning walk. "The incognito of an inn is one of its striking privileges," says Hazlitt. Few have reason or wish to conceal their identity during a constitutional in the gathering light of day. On the other hand; the essential feature of travelling incognito—a merging of oneself indistinguishably in the general mass of humanity—is certainly repeated. Rich or poor, influential or unknown, morning walkers ordinarily look alike, for aged dress or shabby trousers gives no hint of rank or wealth. Theirs is a democratic pastime.

A Time of Festivals.

THE approach of *Basant Panchmi* is a reminder that the flowering of some of India's most gorgeous trees is at hand, that plainsmen will not much longer go shrouded against the cold and that chills and coughs will soon have less opportunity of afflicting the human frame. The *Rigveda* often mentions three seasons, less often specifies their names—*Grisma* (summer) and *Sarad* (autumn) which complete the triad with *Basant*, the spring. A Rainy Season (*Pra-ṽṛṣ*) and winter (*Hima*) also came into the picture, the latter surely a link with the Latin poet's *Solvitur acris hiemps*. Spring festivals the world over make the heart rejoice not for themselves alone but also because of the time of sunshine and growth that they herald. In hot countries the summer brings tribulations as well as pleasures and with these most dwellers on India's plains have had acquaintance. But just because summer takes up so large a part of the year people in many places are better accustomed to it than to winter's cold, and it has other compensations.

When heat is great, the ordinary man suffers less from the attentions of persons in authority charged with supervising his activities : energy oozes from bustling chiefs; many who set the tempo of life in winter retire to the hills or to quiet corners where they cease to trouble. "The Station" settles down to routine appropriate to the temperature, visitors are few, work rather less, and doves coo soothingly all day, while the brain fever bird exerts itself in the resplendent Gul Mohur.

Basant jare ka ant—*Basant* brings end of winter—is a rhyme well known in the country, and the farmer and his family celebrate the passing of a season when people sit closer for warmth. At the *Sangam* at Prayag the *Magh* festival is in full swing, and there will be the age-old scenes of piety on the *Basant* day, *Purnamashi* and *Shivaratri*. Crops are good this year despite a certain lack of rain, prices are better, the harvesting of paddy and sugarcane is well forward. There is more money to spend at the fairs, and the countryman will not fail to make the most of his good fortune on the auspicious dates in his calendar. The progress of the crops, a turn in the season, the need to perform

religious duties—these three have long brought men together in hundreds of thousands on the banks of India's great rivers. Before life became complicated, the human race decided on the appropriate time for sowing, reaping and doing other work by the appearance of the constellations, and ancient tradition connects *Shivaratri* with the glorious group of stars that the west calls Orion and India *Mrig*. On that night men should keep watch. The heavens, as everybody knows, are the poor man's peep-show, and this year, especially in the clear atmosphere of Upper India, they are more than usually splendid with four of the brightest planets to add to their lustre. Such a display will bring many questioners to the booths where those learned in the stars sit to advise visitors: and so brilliant is it that surely some good luck is portended for mankind, of which in these troubled months they are ignorant. The astrologers, let it be hoped, will be cheerful, for the villages have had lean times and need a period of prosperity. The truth must of course be told: but it is not kind to be too gloomy, as some prognostications have been this spring.

The waxing moon in *Magh* looks down on throngs of pilgrims at other places besides *Prayag*;

but if the setting differs, what is done is similar. To the fairs come merchants selling goods, others tender services of one sort or another, social workers erect tents and proffer good advice. It is right that the countryside should be counselled not to spend unwisely now that earnings are better, but the villager does not ordinarily indulge in extravagance at fairs: it is at home that he does things beyond the capacity of his pocket. With its busy hum, cheerful atmosphere and varied scenes, a pilgrims' camp at an important bathing festival is a memorable sight, one that helps the town-dweller to understand village India. But the chaffering and bustle are secondary to the due performance of religious duties and here the pilgrims' fervour is deeply moving. Festivals at the Ganges represent something permanent in Hindu India's life, something that has persisted despite political 'changes and military convulsions. In times so restless it is good to let the eyes and mind repose on what had from antiquity given refreshment to body and spirit. The festivals provide for both in abundant measure.

Monsoon Prelude.

IN village India this is a time of expectancy. Will the monsoon keep its appointment on the normal date ? Will it bring plentiful rain properly spread over the season ? How will rivers behave ? These are questions momentous for the countryside, and anyone gifted with the eye of imagination can see thirsty fields watching the heavens for the answer. The last fortnight before the monsoon is a testing time for living creatures. The ploughman goes more slowly to the field, the village artificer prolongs his midday rest, taken on the floor of his place of work or under a v-shaped roof of straw. Tanks have dwindled, wells gave water reluctantly, crops look pitifully at their possessors, and there is in village lanes a fiercer glare from the sunshine and a heat that ~~strikes~~ harder, while sounds, even birds' songs seem harshly metallic. It is not the nicest time of year, but it holds the promise of a cooler, lusher season.

Townsmen, like country folk, find their energy unequal to the sun's, and very much less

if they live in cities whose walled streets retain the heat and whose inhabitants insist on formality of dress. To these there is still something shocking in shorts and a collar open at the neck, which places upcountry think a sensible attire for hot months, but those inclined to grumble can at any rate console themselves that they are not as some of their predecessors, who thought it essential to go visiting in wigs and heavy "Europe" clothes whatever the temperature. Such habits became known as a sign of griffinage, and the records say that their possessors sometimes died of them. The months from April to June are indeed too sultry for preciousness. Even normal ways of mind and body undergo a change. Men pause more often over their desks to think of a cool green spot in a village or some winding road or lively stream in the hills. To plainsmen in June the delights of Mussorie, Dalhousie and Kashmir seem in prospect greater than before but if such day-dreams are sweet, realities are harsh ; for it is commonly observed that just before the monsoon superiors are unconscionably exacting and subordinates abominably slack. As that is a feeling shared by most of humanity, it is to be inferred that man likes, as far as he is

able, to get rid of some irritability to others around him, so that in all human beings the amount of irritability at any given time is about equal.

Men therefore look to the monsoon for a cooling of mind and body, and for a bountifulness that will increase the fruits of the earth. And at a time like the present there are good reasons why they should pray that Nature will not be niggardly. War influences prices, and the monsoon's quality has the power to reinforce or counter that influence. And large parts of India cannot forget that it is long since they experienced a really plenteous rainy season. From Kathiawar up to the Punjab stretches a "dry belt", and there with anxiety cultivators seek signs in the skies. That their hopes may be fulfilled is the rest of India's wish, for luck has been against them. And now it remains to watch and wait for the majestic panorama that Nature provides free for all.

Desert Weather.

DURING this winter's campaigning in North Africa, much has been written and heard about the weather. Cynics may have smiled a little at the implication, not lacking from British communiques, that meteorology has often worked to the Imperial forces' disadvantage, seldom to the enemy's. Such semi-official hints however are among the traditional commonplaces of warfare. From the German and Italian side has frequently fallen something heavier than mere hints. And in truth, along the arid Southern shores of the Mediterranean, climate must 'always influence military operations more radically than on some other more genial parts of the earth's surface.

Western Egypt and Cyrenaica constitute a land of climatic extremes. To their South lies a huge sun-parched continental mass ; to their North, a smallish straggling land-locked sea. In such a region weather assumes profound practical importance, both for the ordinary soldier or airman, and for the high staff officer directing operations. Neither of them can control or

escape it, whether it means to them just added personal hardship or a general military disaster. For the ordinary member of the Fighting Services it often indeed means hardships or annoyances of a sort little imagined by the public.

Such a man lives short of food often, short of water nearly always, with sand blowing into his food, his eyes, his ears and his bed ; also into his wounds or scratches when he has them, causing them to fester and spread without healing. Rain beats against his tent or bivouac when he possesses these, forcing its way though under the wind's impact to where he sleeps in a growing pool of cold water. Though it is characteristic of deserts to be hot by day and cold by night, in Cyrenaica there are local modifications. During winter, heavy clothes must be worn all the time. At night it may freeze. Near the coast there is always heavy dew. By day, in this region, the air is kept pleasant by a cool breeze even at the fierce height of midsummer ; in winter come the famous rainsqualls. Further inland it is either hot or cold ; seldom temperate, one extreme or the other depending on the direct rays of the sun. Here can be found

no shade, no protection ; but it is possible to sleep in the open without water-proof, there being little or no dew.

Sandstorms are the most spectacular phenomena of the desert and play the chief part with rain, in checking military operations. In summer they are mainly mere duststorms, but even these manage to penetrate everything and cover man and machine with a thick coating of particles. They prevent flying in the areas involved, and generally spoil all engines. Visibility under such condition is usually about 200 yards, but varies much with the wind-gust. In winter begin the real sandstorms. These raise sand and grit to a height of 1,000 feet, forming a wall thicker than a London "pea souper," with visibility about a foot. Such a storm may last for three days or so (as have some recently), and may stop all operations. Frequently these sandy abominations are interspersed with downpours of cold driving rain so heavy that they can in a few minutes transform desert into a sea of mud where vehicles will sink to above wheel-top and where a landing-ground may be a potential death-trap. It was such weather that at one stage helped the Imperial armies at the beginning of the present

campaign, by bogging Axis tanks in Cyrenaica. It seems, within the last week or so, to have similarly helped the enemy.

Other occasional characteristics of the North African climate are low cloud and ground fog. These chiefly affect the R. A. F. They make night flying most difficult in a country where landmarks are in any case scarce, and wireless aid is perhaps unreliable owing to rapid movements of the ground forces. Here a navigational error might mean a long walk home on a diet of snails.

In Praise of Fireplaces.

LAMB in an essay describes, with a marvellous economy of words, the sense of enjoyment that can be got from reposing in a sick room when slightly indisposed. Many things, like the subdued closing of a door, build up an atmosphere of deference and comfort. A number of people acquire that sort of feeling about their surroundings at the end of the year. One may take a room, or a whole house, for granted on most days ; but at the greatest of festive seasons it gives out something that adds to the owners' well-being. Familiar things that seemed impersonal are found to possess character and to radiate benevolence. The garden glows in at the window, having an early flower or two ; the bookshelf, packed with volumes of fame and substance that ought to have been read long ago, forgets to look reproachful ; and curtains and chairs and the radio set combine to put their owner at his ease. For this is a season when those who serve come with gifts in their hands, and inanimate objects in a bungalow also have a *dali* to offer.

The cold weather is not without responsibility. A nip in the air or a biting wind is supposed to freeze initiative and make terrestrial things draw shuddering into themselves. But those who say that have not seen the 'sparkle and vivacity that the cold weather imparts to Upper India's plains. Red walls and pearl turrets, green lawns and brown hills deck themselves in their proper colours, whereas in the height of summer their varied hues are smudged out by the sun's glare and appear only at early morning or, fatigued after the day's heat, at evening. Cold air that makes the countryman shroud himself acts as a tonic to the earth's surface. And as it is outside the bungalow, so is it within. In May and June, when the sun is a raging tyrant, many dwellers in bungalows gaze at their fireplace and wonder how they could ever have tolerated burning coal and wood in it. There it languishes in neglect, the depository of odds and ends of paper, a thing of so little importance that it is hidden from view. But as October moves towards November its vacant and melancholy expression vanishes, giving place to expectancy and consciousness of high function. And so the day comes when a pair of hands takes the screen

away, dismisses the teazles in the grate, and makes the room resound with the noise of crackling brands.

A fireplace with glowing logs and an assortment of Christmas cards is a symbol of peace and goodwill. Everything else may be subtracted from the room, but if that remains with its cheerful blaze, its possessor's feeling of comfort will not appreciably diminish. But because a fireplace is, as it were, a cold weather visitor, it offers an admonition suited to the departure of the old year. The good season is here with its invigorating qualities, its stimulus to effort and its interlude of a few days when business cares are cast aside, pleasure is sought and feelings and memories are kindly. But a new year lies ahead, with an insistent voice that calls to heavy tasks—how heavy they will be for him no individual knows. By the time the fire screen is put up again, men and women will have journeyed well into the twelve months called 1941. They hope to find the path not too rough or perplexing. And when the end of the year comes, it will be good if contentment awaits them in the things around, and they can again find quiet satisfaction at their own fireside. In times like these that is a great and good wish.

The Idle.

MILTON wrote finely about the purpose of a good book, treasured up for a life beyond life. Someone else has observed, less finely, that the purpose of literature is to enable people to take pleasure in the perusal of printed characters. It is part of the essence of a good book that much of its time is spent in rest. It does not circulate, nor is it perused, all the time. And there are minds that resent this apparent idleness.

Some critics of books have gone further than resentment. They have actively wondered how books can be prevented from burying the earth under their mass. They have kindly thoughts for those wild conquerors who are narrated, falsely it would seem, to have used up the famous libraries of Cairo as fuel for heating their baths. In recent times a number of suggestions have been made, the most notable in an essay justly famous. Why not give as prizes, asked the writer, not books but the right to eliminate books? Let each prize winner at school, college or tourna-

ment consign some book or author to oblivion. If the occasion is especially important let a whole department be wiped out. Let the winner of the Newdigate decree the extinction of all poetry, the woman who wins the singles at Wimbledon, the end of all treatises on the Stone Age or *The Way To Make India Happy*. Thousands of years ago it was noticed that of the making of many books there was no end, and the process has not slackened.

In a letter to a newspaper in England a woman has revived interest in these grave matters. What annoys her is the British Museum and the hundreds of thousands of books on its shelves. Why at a time like this should they not be put to useful purpose, she asks and as she refers to shortage of paper her reference apparently is the advisability of throwing them all into the vat, pulping them up again and using them as paper for more books or more government circulars. It is an interesting idea, applicable not only in Bloomsbury but also in the Bodleian, in the great library at Cambridge and a dozen others. It suggests a new valuation of books. This text of Plato, a don might ashamedly comment, has not been remade and reprinted for over twenty years;

it is time we had something new, in modern workmanship. Other uses can be thought out for this time of stress. The British Museum alone has material for many barricades and parapet defence against bombs. And there is a sharp point in the reminder that we amass books which we do not read; that we possess but not for a purpose; that books as well as men can be an encumbrance to the earth.

The Sweet Restorer.

MAN, with much scientific invention and discovery to his credit, still cannot wholly explain many elementary facts about his existence. He can perform marvels of surgery and healing : but he cannot specify with certainty the bodily mechanism that causes him to go to sleep. The characteristics he exhibits in that condition have been carefully observed, with special attention to the brain : but a standard work of reference confesses that up to 1911 no satisfactory hypothesis had been advanced as to the precise changes that produce the state of unconsciousness. At Benares recently, in the Physiology section of the Indian Science Congress, Dr. B. B. Dikshit carried the story down to to-day with the admission that the problem is still unsolved. It is known that there exists a centre in the mid-brain governing the phenomenon of sleep. Scientists have been searching for a chemical agent that acts naturally on it when set in motion, presumably, by fatigue. Lactate of soda was once thought to be responsible but failed in

a test. Another surmise, based on the observation of frogs, was that people go to sleep because their brains become deprived of oxygen. The latest conjecture, according to Dr. Dikshit, favours acetylcholine, which is present in the human brain and fulfils all the conditions except one : that it has not yet been shown to accumulate round the brain centre during sleep and to leave it during wakefulness.

That evidence may turn up, bringing with it the knowledge how men may better control insomnia, doze peacefully off while bombs fall around or—of more general application—obtain deep and refreshing slumbers despite climate or the nervous strain of modern city life. Nowhere is the blessing of sound sleep more appreciated than in camps or hospitals where troops recover after battle, and in cities where civilians have to put up with constant air raids. Sleeplessness is the parent of a brood of other evils, and much has been said in London about means of preventing it, or at least reducing the discomfort and strain on the eardrums and nerves that are causes. On the other hand, some people seem to have less than the normal amount of slumber, and yet be none the worse, and some

can habituate themselves to taking the normal amount at irregular intervals. Among the world's great men a number are recorded as having this faculty in an extraordinary degree. In the bombed cities of to-day many people of less eminence are finding in themselves powers that they never suspected : before the war they "woke at the slightest sound" or "could never sleep in a train" : to-day they are tougher. There are classes of workers whose duties demand that they toil at night when the rest of humanity is asleep. But in general it remains true that a man can enjoy few natural boons greater than normal, refreshing sleep during the hours of darkness.

"Now blessings light on him that first invented sleep," exclaimed the author of *Don Quixote*. "It covers a man all over, thoughts and all, like a cloak ; it is meat for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, heat for the cold, and cold for the hot." The nations' literature abounds in praise like that, *Macbeth* appears the greater criminal for being accused of "murdering sleep"—the innocent sleep that "knits up the ravelled sleeve of care" and is the "balm of hurt minds." The ancients personified it as a handsome youth,

the son of Night, and recognized its kindness by borrowing the name as a mild synonym for death. A sleepy person is rarely malicious. Dickens' Fat Boy dozed on his legs but had no harm in him. The worst that can be said of such a one is that he is unreliable, as the Hindustani proverb acknowledges—"sote ko sota kab jagata hai?" But sleep requires no apology, least of all in tropical lands where heat and insects often conspire to drive it away. There are seasons when the sun nags all day and the air remains scorching at midnight : when the mosquito net seems to invite inside the very creatures it was designed to frustrate : when nerves are stretched and even the whirr of a distant owl jars the consciousness. To the sufferer tossing from side to side of the bed there is no need to sing the praises of sleep. He knows how blessed it is and will not become more appreciative if scientists tell him what hormones, what obscure brain-processes enable him to enjoy it. It is not necessary to study the chemical structure of a lily or daffodil to realize how lovely a flower it is.

The Religion of God.

CHRISTMAS Day in the midst of total war. The bare statement should make us realize that it is time to get down to the very foundations of thought, the springs of action, the seeds of faith. Civilised Europe, divided into two camps, is busy blotting out civilization with destructive forces which human ingenuity has brought to the most devastating pitch of efficiency. Men, women, children, industry, crops, buildings, art and beauty are being methodically smashed. What then is the meaning and purpose of Man, the small parasite who breeds on the surface of a tiny planet which is one of the most insignificant objects in the jewelled infinity of space ?

Why has he not with all his intelligence learnt to live in a friendly and rational manner ? It would seem so simple for the animal man to recognize his own kind and live in this wide world on a share and share alike basis. It is so plain that if the ingenuity and effort that men now employ in trying to get the better of one another were employed in the common service,

all would be so much happier and so much better off. What is this perversity in us which prevents us from doing what we see to be sensible and right? The sweet legend of the song of the Angels, the story of the birth of the Prince of Peace, the Saviour of Mankind, will it forever go for little or nothing? Is it to be just a mellowing influence, an impetus to good fellowship and charity, but powerless to check the greater greeds, the strong passions that produce war? The answer must come in these years or never. Total war brings us firmly up against it. Total war requires a total remedy. Nothing else will save us.

To us it seems evident that total war must end war. Mankind will finally revolt from the consequences of its own madness. To-day we are living in the world's greatest age. If it is an age of horror and suffering it is also the age of a great new hope and faith. It was indeed but simple common-sense which inspired the prophecies in the New Testament that final war and desolation on an undreamed of scale would usher in the age of peace when men will have learned to live as brothers. And, let us make no mistake, it is the total war that will produce

the total peace. We are in the war and we shall fight it through. Those who would patch up and seek to save what they can belong to the order that is passing away, the long ages of recurring wars.

One inevitable result of total war must be the spread of a true religion. Conceit will wither and the awareness that whatever we have or are comes not from our separate selves, but from the universal source of life, the Creator and Sustainer of us all, will replace it. Already every mail brings news of the universal friendliness, the sense of brotherhood which the bomb has introduced into England. To think what Hitler has done for us, writes one, and we are told that never again can the English be accused of being stand-offish. What is happening in Britain is happening elsewhere, and the end is not yet. The long winter nights in shelters lie ahead. In another two years of total war the true peace, the peace in the human heart, not the mere absence of war, will no longer seem to the cynical "realist" the impossible dream that to-day he writes it down. The religion of the one God and Father of us all which, to mention them in their historical order, was the religion of Krishna, the Buddha, Christ and Mohammed will ultimately prevail, and the long contention cease.

The Wicked Scientist.

SIR C. V. Raman has in a public address defended scientists against the charge that they are war-makers, and are to blame for this war. It is the kind of charge that is easy to make, and it can, by a little careful use of inaccurate language, be made to look plausible. A few years ago a distinguished physicist presiding over a conference of scientists in England lamented that men had progressed in the sphere of the intellect much more rapidly than in the sphere of morals. And some other famous thinkers have maintained that in morals man has made no advance since civilization appeared on the earth. Men can make discoveries but cannot make the best use of what they discover. This thesis has been the subject of many important discussions.

The charge is hard on scientists, whose one interest is to find out how God's will operates in the universe. Science in itself is neither moral nor immoral; but revelatory. It is men, and generally not the scientists among them, who decide what use shall be made of the results

of scientific investigation. Unfortunately consequences of a war may be so serious for a defeated nation that every device helpful to victory is likely to be used. The aeroplane was not invented to be a bomber, nor the internal combustion engine to speed up campaigns, nor certain gases discovered to poison men, women and children. Out of coaltar by-products the past hundred years have learnt to make more than a thousand things. These include valuable medicines as well as destructive explosives. The latter are of value not only in war. They are used beneficially in mining, in clearing ground, in a hundred ways. It is human will that decides between the good and the evil use.

War to-day is terribly destructive for two chief reasons. Explosives are powerful and are used with a large hand. Military movement, which remained constant at the speed of marching or, at highest, of riding soldiers from the beginning of time until the other day, is now determined by the speed of aeroplanes and tanks. This high destruction and velocity is not of the essence of war. It is on record that two confederacies of peoples on the banks of the Nile

enjoyed a twenty-years war in which casualties were three killed in battle and one eaten by a crocodile. Science did not drive the Greeks against Troy, nor the Assyrians against the people of Judæa, though we cannot doubt that these belligerents used whatever science they possessed to down the other side. It is not convincing to blame the scientist for the horrors of modern war; even though many of these have become possible through application of what scientists have discovered. Men, who should use, have a tendency to misuse. They must either by development of the moral sense or (another way of saying the same thing) by agreement among themselves learn to put restraint on themselves.

Wonders to Order.

MAN said the wise Bacon, can do nothing but move things from one place to another. Nature working within does the rest. Man nevertheless has considerable skill in setting Nature to work, and Beltsville in Maryland seems destined to become immortal through human contrivance. It has an agricultural research centre, where wonderful things are being done. Men have for thousands of years experimented with animals and insects and plants making of them something that Nature unassisted does not know. The food grains we enjoy are not the wild grain of centuries ago. The fruits of to-day have been developed most of them from humble originals. A modern example of human improvement is the loganberry. Mr. Logan the American in a moment of high love for the human race combined in one fruit the qualities of the blackberry and the raspberry, and Nature, whether rejoicing in the achievement or admitting its own remissness, lets it continue without

reversion to the original generation after generation, which is not the habit of hybrids.

Beltsville's scientists have a wide and synoptic outlook. Their work enters many spheres. Coloured eggs have been known in some countries as a treat for the children on Easter morning ; boiled in cochineal, they are served up purple to delight young eyes. The hens lay them like that for Easter, mothers tell the little ones, and Freud is not the only thinker who has shuddered at the potentialities of evil in deceiving babes. Henceforth deceit of that kind will not be necessary. Beltsville's hens work to a colour scheme, and we may infer that the list of shades to which they adjust their production is long. In another department apples receive skilled attention. It was when one fell on Newton, said the small schoolboy, that he invented gravity. Beltsville is producing apples that defy the law of gravity ; when shaken loose by a boy who chances to lurch heavily against the tree when no one is looking they will apparently stay where they are or soar upwards.

Other marvels at the station are hogs that will not sunburn (sunburn, we must infer, is detrimental to bacon) bees with good disposi-

tion, that will not show fight when considerably moved from flowers where they are wasting their time to others with more honey ; chicks with identity marks ; onions that cause no tears. Many other wonders are referred to in an article in an American magazine. Politicians are often charged with giving no thought to the kind of brave new world that is to follow the war. Beltsville is thinking splendidly as deputy for Mr. Roosevelt, and we have no doubt that an interested public will be fertile in suggestions for it to work on.

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For Inventors.

IT is announced that the U. S. A. Inventor's Council has sent out a call for ideas. That, we are sure, does not imply that Washington does not normally receive ideas and welcome a proportion of them. War gives greater opportunity for the fertile imagination: there is a special welcome for ideas that may strengthen the one side and weaken the other. In Britain the suggestion was recently made in high place that useful ideas should find reward in public honour. Why should not the public know that "it was Mr. X who thought out such and such an improvement in soldiers' equipment?" In India a call was sent out some months ago, asking men with ideas to send them in. Current fiction is fond of the man who has a secret weapon, or a formula for one that will finish the war in a few days. Men of that kind usually have a galaxy of attractive women, from many countries, at their heels.

Even crackpot ideas will receive fair examination, says the American council remembering

that among ideas condemned as crackpot in their early lives are the steam engine, electric light (in which Faraday sought to interest Gladstone by pointing out that he would one day be able to tax it), wireless and the aeroplane. Humorous journals have made merry over the man who advocated a steel and concrete shelter over Britain. It is nevertheless fact that some one has seriously suggested a lath-and-plaster Britain far out in the Atlantic, for the misleading of enemy bombers and commerce raiders. It is fact too that some one has complained to a Calcutta newspaper about a Government and corporation that have omitted to arch over all Calcutta's streets with thick concrete.

We may smile at what we think extravagances but a sturdy imagination has points over a feeble one. We can hold almost in reverence the man whose plan for defeating sea-sickness is treasured in Britain's archives. People could go to sea in his contrivance and not know it. For it was a huge hollow wooden drum with railway lines inside, so that the train would run into it at Dover, drive it forward by its moving weight, run out on to rails at Calais, and so on to Paris. It is possible that from that fine con-

ception, worthy of a Leonardo, has come some idea now at work for some other purpose.

More than 45,000 ideas have already been examined, many tested, scores are already in operation. So a message from America informs us. In the sphere of substitutes, we suppose, there is room for new ideas, for so much has happened of late that new ways of getting desired results must be found. New parlour games are possible. Those who have the gift of invention can make them up with a view to helping their country. Discussions on the best way to win the war need not always turn on the formula "If only general so and so would do such and such."

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Science and Life.

NEARLY a quarter of a century ago the Bose Institute was founded to stress the importance of plant life and link it with other life around it. Its founder, Sir J. C. Bose, who died in 1937, devoted his life and energy to the habits and science of plant life round which revolved the intricate scientific relationship between all things living, entailing many types of research into zoology and anthropology. For twenty years the institute enjoyed the leadership of its founder under whom an efficient band of workers helped to link up science with life, and who, since his death, have not relaxed their labours. Interest has, therefore, centred round the twenty-fourth anniversary of the institute, celebrated last week-end, and in connexion with which a lecture was delivered by Dr. J. C. Ghosh, Director, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, on "Science and Modern Life."

Choosing as his theme the double-edged weapon which science can be, he deplored its present use in creating destructive instruments

rather than productive ones. The misuse of knowledge is not altogether a modern problem; it has always existed whenever the intelligence of man has transcended his potentialities for good, and converted him into a thing of evil where his intellect merely functions for the purpose of destruction. We have the Biblical parallel of how "Lucifer, Son of the Morning" was converted by his intellectual pride and its misuse into Satan, the Fallen Angel. Then again, taking a comparison which Dr. Ghosh drew, we turn to the battle of Kurukshetra, as recorded in the Mahabharata, which led to inhuman slaughter on a mass scale. It was then that the wise men and scholars got together and said that knowledge must not be allowed to become venal; it must be used only for the uplift of mankind and not for the purpose of securing power for one section or one person. But through the ages man has differed little, and Kurukshetra has found many counterparts, culminating in the present world struggle.

But, as the wise men of old we too, speak of post-war reconstruction, and how there is no sin greater than the abuse of knowledge. And here Dr. Ghosh rightly stressed that no plans can

make for lasting peace, unless they embrace all communities and all classes. Science has made it possible for us, by the rapidity of communications and the progress of technology, to consider this world as an economic whole. It is science that has laid the foundations of internationalism, which must not be converted into props for sectional aggrandizement, for thus are the seeds of future wars laid. The modern world, with its legacy of experience, history and knowledge, should be warned not to repeat the mistakes the ancients made, whereby there was no guarantee for peace.

Another pertinent point brought out by the lecturer was that an industrially backward and unprogressive India was a source of great danger as a possible future victim of totalitarianism. Any efforts at post-war reconstruction should aim at ending this condition, otherwise there will be little stability. There are great industrial potentialities in India, which would facilitate the prosecution of war, and at the same time, help to build the foundations of any industrial movement that may be contemplated after the war.

Twenty-five years ago Sir J. C. Bose pledged his science and his knowledge to save plant life

from the ravages of man. His object was to make human beings realize that the plant is not insensible but is both sensitive and feeling. To-day upon the twenty-fourth anniversary of his institute, the lecturer pleads for man's consideration for man—let science weld human relationships together, not destroy them. This is progress.

Opportunity.

A resolution on the agenda paper of the Bengal Legislative Assembly called attention to what it called "Government's failure to introduce compulsory training in schools, colleges and universities." It was not moved; for want of time many resolutions were not moved. Similar resolutions however have been discussed in recent years, and it is not certain that anything new would or could have been said.

Some would support a motion of the kind because of their interest in general physical fitness. Others because at a time like this young men should be not only kept fit but taught something of the art of defending their country. What is uncertain is whether the young people are as anxious for compulsory training as some who speak about them in legislatures make them out to be. University training corps offer them opportunities. These corps are small, it is admitted. But they often have vacancies. Keen men join, but students in the mass do not seem to press in.

It is not probable that compulsory military training for school-boys and college students will be seen yet awhile. The Army authorities have other things to occupy them, other more urgent needs for what money they have. Physical training is another matter. In that sphere much is being done. But there are two special organizations, called into being by the war, where students can find opportunities of physical exercise as well as some training in the elements of drill. These are the A. R. P. Service and the Civic Guards. In these students will be welcome : many have been welcomed. By serving in these they can feel both that they are doing something for their country and people and are improving their own physical fitness. The experience so far has been that while many students are keen the whole body of students is not burning with zeal to turn out day after day for barrack square parades and street exercises. Of those who have joined a large proportion are students. That is as it should be. They can give vigour and enthusiasm and intelligence to the work. But under trial they fall into a variety of groups. There are the keen, who learn their work, turn out regularly, cheerfully agree that at a time

like this personal convenience is not so important as it was. Others after joining scarcely trouble to remember the obligations they have voluntarily accepted. Many even use their status as students as a justification for ignoring their obligations and their officers. They have their examinations to pass and cannot take time away from their books.

All over India these services need men. Those who join will learn something of drill, something of working with others, something of corporate obedience, and will profit in physical condition from the exercise. Calcutta needs to maintain many thousands of fit men in the two services. All over the country similar need exists. Students are many, and if they are keen to join and make themselves competent they can ensure that these services become very good organizations. If they yearn for compulsion, as some who speak for them, or about them, in the legislatures say they do, their officers will readily treat them as compulsorily as they wish. For any general system of conscription in schools and colleges there must be evidence of a general desire to accept it. We do not know where to look for that evidence.

Co-education.

AT Coimbatore the other day Mr. Srinivasa Sastri gave his blessing to co-education. Not only is it a good thing, he said, but it is economical, which is a great advantage in a country where money for education is hard to find. This opinion from a man of his standing will go a long way.

In countries where there are no social reasons why boys and girls should not be educated together it is generally found convenient to educate them separately when the money can be found. Organization is easier, and there is advantage in having boys taught by men and girls by women though useful exceptions to this general rule could be cited. But even in what we call well-to-do countries it is not possible to have adequate separate systems for boys and girls throughout. A small town or village might find the resources, in pupils, teachers and money, for one school for all, whereas two small schools might be beyond its capacity. What generally happens in India when a locality strains itself to maintain a

school for boys and a school for girls is that the girls' school is neglected ; teachers of poor calibre are employed, no one bothers much about it.

The mixed school as it is commonly called has served a useful purpose in some countries, and will become more common in India. Universities have begun to permit under conditions the attendance of young women in men's colleges and of girls in boys' high schools. Feeling against this innovation steadily lessens as it is understood that women and girls are thus given better opportunities than they would otherwise get. India cannot afford good standards everywhere, and a good mixed school, with men and women on the staff, is a finer asset than the total of a good boys' school and an inefficient girls' school, which is what many places can show. In the villages especially the mixed school, which is common in English villages, would stimulate elementary education—a genuine mixed school in which boys and girls are taught together by men and women teachers; not the kind of school often found in which men teach boys and four or five little girls are put away in a corner and neglected because the men teachers

regard them as nuisances and there are no women teachers. If education is to be spread and improved in India, every way of getting better results for the money must be considered.

Hobbies.

SIR MAHARAJ SINGH has asked students of Lucknow University in particular and Indian students generally to cultivate hobbies. He has not given any reason why he makes this the first of his three suggestions in his convocation address. Perhaps he saw in hobbies a possible remedy for the excessive interest in politics which students in several Universities and cities display, often to the annoyance of their teachers and guardians.

It is too true that politics are the chief hobby for groups of students in nearly every college and University in this country to-day ; but other hobbies are not altogether unknown. Photography and painting of which Sir Maharaj speaks eloquently make a steady appeal to an increasingly large number; interest in music distinguishes not a few. Gardening and carpentry, which he also recommends, seem less popular and not without reason. These are best pursued in rural areas and not in those urban surroundings in which most Universities are situated. Sir Maharaj

has suggested birds and plants as well. The city-bred boy and girl know very little about them and the fault does not seem to be theirs. The starry heavens, another recommendation, are a familiar enough field to those senior students who study astronomy and would possibly have attracted others too, giving them recreation as well as knowledge ; but a telescope is not always part of a school's or a college's equipment. Love of nature is less rare than many may suppose. To many students it is still a theme for competent and even brilliant verse often finding its way into college magazines. In cities, however, it tends to be replaced by an interest in man-made things. With a superior type of students literature and economics are almost a passion ; they study them not because they are bookish by temperament but because they rebel against the fare that University syllabuses offer and find both relief and excitement in the new ideas that reach this country from Europe and America.

Students' lives and thoughts are not all of a piece in British India's eleven Provinces and the States ; but in all a remarkable change has taken place in the last quarter of a century. The process began earlier. Giving his reminiscences to

a Bengal audience a few days ago, Sir Nripendra-nath Sircar drew a dreary picture of college life in Calcutta in the eighties. There were no college Magazines then; to-day the College that does not boast of a Magazine forfeits its right to exist. Students demand, too, the right to elect an Editor from among themselves instead of having one nominated from among their Professors by the College authority. There were no College Unions nor primary committees affiliated to an all-India body. Nor were there Fine Arts societies. These societies are certainly evidence that students have other interests than lectures, examinations and politics. They are proof that hobbies are cultivated if not by each student, certainly by some students in every class. In annual exhibitions are seen photographs, paintings, cartoons and much high-class work done on wood and stone and silk. These assuredly are a pleasant and a useful interlude in lives marred by strikes, lock-outs and *hartals*. In these, finely-tempered minds attain the self-expression for which tutorials and examinations can at best be poor and reluctant material.

Rumour.

GREAT writers from Virgil to Hans Andersen have wondered about rumour. Reason, common-sense and learning have not killed the rumour-making capacity in man. This has given much to history and religion and in the form of myth has created an interesting branch of knowledge. In the twentieth century it is too late, for all its critical apparatus, to disentangle in the records of the distant past sober (and dull) truth from exciting belief based on less than fact.

We shall never know whether Horatius and two more kept the bridge, or whether Cleopatra did melt pearls in vinegar. Even in this sophisticated age we have seen (with the eyes of others) a Russian army in England with snow on boots and beards, and an Angel of Mons, who helped strong men in danger, but forgot the women and children. Now and then an old myth (which is rumour solidified) is exposed as invention. The small boy who kept awake on Christmas Eve to discover that Santa Claus was his own father lost something, but gained compensation in his determination to "look into that Robinson Crusoe business next."

Calcutta is at the moment pre-eminent in the qualities that breed rumours and waft them on their way. It would not be surprising one morning to be told that a Russian Army was advancing through Central India with snow on its eyebrows. Already we have been told of American armies arriving in Bombay and Australian brigades marching boisterously through the streets of Bhawani-pur. We hear too of Japanese airmen so thoughtful as to announce by wireless or through friends in our midst the exact dates and times when they mean to bomb Calcutta, a thoughtfulness all too rare among air forces. Then there have been the Japanese aeroplanes that when about to attack vessels in the Bay of Bengal recognized Indians on board and politely turned away. Happenings of this sort are much more interesting than news, especially when news is day after day much the same as before.

It is in relation to bombs especially that rumour, whether it keeps its feet on the ground or not, has its head among the clouds. Calcutta, it seems, is to disappear in a blaze of horror when an incendiary is dropped. That sort of thing proceeds not only out of the mouths of babes and sucklings and bearers and *malis*. Some years

ago a K. C. in England told the country that if a bomb of the size of a walnut fell in London everything would disappear over a radius of several miles. All K. C.'s, it has often been reflected since, are not wise or omniscient. A prominent doctor in London gave very different advice; when a raid begins, was his prescription, go upstairs, get into a warm bath (he spoke in winter) and lie there in comfort, smoking a pipe, until the All Clear goes. Demonstrations with incendiaries, it would seem, have been too few in Calcutta. The fear of them, which is driving people away, is the fear of the unknown, which is always magnified.

At a time like this everyone meets someone whose sister's husband's cousin's mother-in-law has seen thousands of dead in Rangoon streets, or large navies from Japan or Germany passing stealthily in the dark between India and Ceylon, or enemy submarines up the Brahmaputra. To spread rumours that weaken the general morale is a serious offence. What is wanted is a kind of intermediate rumour, that will make men alert and determined in their work but not fill their hearts and legs with fear. But what department of Government can be relied on for these ?

The Spoken Word.

SPEECH was presumably given to men that they might communicate ideas and wishes and knowledge one to another by the spoken word. It seems to be an eccentricity that in schools generally in most countries study is of the written and printed rather than of the uttered. How a language sounds and should sound receives much less attention. Little children are exercised in reading. This mechanical ability reached, it is assumed ever after that speech will look after itself. So the study of language becomes a silent study. How few schools anywhere have a teacher of elocution on the staff; a teacher of clear and beautiful speaking who teaches children to give the best possible shape to sounds. This at present is a part of language teaching seldom thought about.

Much of the current views about teaching languages has been derived from the place given to Latin in the English public school system. Methods that are good for that, it is argued, must be good everywhere. What is generally forgotten

is that three or four centuries ago Latin was a vocational subject of study. Boys had to learn it because it was the tongue commonly used for professional work, essential for one who wished to enter the service of the Crown, or the Church, or law, or attract wide attention to anything he wrote. In comparison English was trivial and vulgar. Therefore, it was often treated as an enemy of sound education; if a boy used his own tongue too much he might fail to master the learned tongue that he would need for success in life. Therefore in schools its use was often forbidden. It is probable that Shakespeare when a boy at Stratford-on-Avon's grammar school was punished if during prescribed hours he spoke the language he was soon to use with such power. In a book by a Huguenot teacher in London in Elizabeth's time we find an indictment by a tell-tale; "a tell-tale reports that a certain criminal named William hath spitted on my paper, torn my book, put out my theme, trod my hat under his feet, marred my copy, and spoken English." There is also on record the lament of a Winchester Headmaster of about the same time, of pupils "some disorderly in manners others in clothes : hear 'them talking English, swearing

and boasting of their birth rather than their learning." It was a sore point that English boys would slip into their own tongue in prohibited hours.

Attention to the mother tongue as speech, that is in its primary function, is a desideratum in education everywhere. Yet for years together, in school and college, this aspect of language teaching is little regarded, the assumption being that everyone speaks his own language well as a matter of course. We live under democratic institutions, and in a democracy wisdom is supposed to be found by discussion and debate, activities which imply ability in speech. When a boy or girl leaves school at 16 or 17, or college at 20 or 21, speech is likely to have received less notice in preparation for life than any other capacity.

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The Soil as Teacher.

IN an address at Karachi Dr. G. T. Wrench said some stimulating things about the soil that feeds us. His subject was "The Soil and Character," and his especial reference was to the conditions created for that province by the Sukkur Barrage. City people forget the soil, what it does, what it needs. That is why, it has been pointed out again and again, an urbanized population tends to be wasteful with food, not instinctively aware of the cost in effort and care of growing food. The same ignorance shows itself in various ways. Not long ago a letter in *The Times* described a group of boys who seemed to know everything about aërials and valves and positive and negative, but when asked where milk came from blushed all (with one knowing exception) as if the adult in charge had asked an improper question.

"As the soil is, so are the men upon it." That Dr. Wrench laid down as a first principle. Unreliable soil, unreliable men. This principle becomes of great importance in the conditions of

Sind, where the Barrage promises an uplift in the level of life ; there has been a low grade, an all-round higher grade is coming in. Obviously economic improvement is included in this. But Dr. Wrench was not primarily concerned with that. The change that most deserves attention is the change in character. In pre-Barrage days the soil depended upon scanty and irregular rain, on the Indus and canals, just as irregular in their ability to give all the water wanted. On such a soil the worker, having no certain reward of his toil and feeling himself in the hands of Chance, naturally became lazy, thriftless, purposeless. The soil could not be kept fertile. And where these baffling conditions were found, it was not only the cultivator who lived haphazardly. Why should the landowner too worry himself with the long patient toil that makes up agriculture ?

Even then men adjusted their lives to the soil, feasted when harvests were good, went lean when they failed. It seemed as if that was all life could give them. They did not know that the soil could be awakened to reliability by proper treatment. Modern engineering has given it this awakening. The city helped by providing the money, through the banks ; without the

credit that they created the Barrage could never have been built. And now the Barrage, by assuring men of the reward of their toil, is modifying their character, and it is the task of statesmanship to quicken this change by suitable measures, and especially by a suitable system of education, which for those who live by agriculture should be an education on the land, where they can see nature at work. In other words, the soil will teach them, give them their knowledge, and their ways of thinking about life. Given a soil of good fertility and confident cultivators, a country can be happy. Sind has had its own life, made by a soil that was peculiar. The building of the Barrage will change soil, character, economics, social conditions, customs of land tenure. It may even make a welcome change in the minds of some of Sind's urban politicians, though Dr. Wrench in an address full of good things had no time to touch on that.

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Music and Language.

CAN music be separated from language? Can it be absolute, complete in itself? In Europe argument about this would seem unmeaning: Bach, Mozart, Beethoven are answer enough. But in south India there has been pleasant controversy, consequent on the broadcasting from the Madras station of Classical Carnatic music in preference to other music. Carnatic music, a fusion of many elements, goes with three languages, Sanskrit, Telegu and Kanada. To many who compose it none of these is the mother tongue. Why is not Tamil or Malayalam used at the microphone, it is asked. The essence of music is pure sound, *nada*, what does the language matter? Any language is a suitable vehicle for a musical composition. A child lilt or croons a tune long before he has any clear idea of what language means.

The chief appeal in music, says the other school, does not come from the language that accompanies tunes. In Carnatic music language

has a minor role, though this is not negligible. "In the happy combination of superb words and sublime music we get a supremely ideal song," said the Maharaja of Pithapuram when inaugurating the Music conference in Madras ; and the President of the conference observed that an understanding of the meaning of the song certainly led to its better appreciation and enjoyment."

Thus the arguments. Some politicians who champion the Tamil fear that because Tamil songs have been neglected on public occasions the Tamil language has lost popularity. These same politicians, at the time of the controversy over Hindi in the days of the Congress Ministry, declared themselves convinced that Tamil would not suffer from the spread of Hindi. If politicians were consistent the world would be much less interesting.

There are songs without words and the noblest music is complete in itself, without the help of language. In its highest purity music appeals to feeling and intellect without external aids. Yet in general in all countries song means tune and words. Folk tunes need verse to give them the best appeal to patriotism and national pride

and melody can often be enriched and ennobled by language. It is a common instinct to apply words to tunes ; when the words fail, the instinct falls back on "tra la la" or other primitive equivalents for words. It seems sensible that words fitted to melody should be words understood by singer and hearers. Yet convention sometimes decides otherwise, and thousands of audiences have enjoyed songs and choruses in Italian or French or German without knowing a word of these tongues. But then many singers are such that only the very few can tell in what language they are singing : hearers have to be content with the sound, the *nada*.

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Five Freedoms.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT has set out five considerations on which the peace of the world might be based, and without which there cannot be that trust between nations on which alone world peace can rest. These five freedoms are hardly to be contrasted with President Wilson's famous Fourteen Points. Those were proposals for bringing a war to an end. President Roosevelt is concerned at the moment rather to indicate general conditions that must prevail if nations are to live without the danger of war. Certain habits and practices are to be given up. The world must be free of them and the fears they generate. And they are chiefly practices that characterize the totalitarian State, which wishes to keep the individual mind always under obedience and in subjection.

President Roosevelt admits 'that the efficiency of the totalitarian State has its attraction for many, and reveals that it has a large body of admirers in the United States. The ways of de-

mocracy are slow, and may be tortuous, for decisions in a democratic State are obtained by discussion and contemplation and persuasion. Is it not, however, possible that promptitude of decision is not always the same thing as wise decision, and that the State and nation are often better served by the slow and patient search for wisdom in many minds than by imperative ordinances issuing from one or two minds? The weakness of a democracy is not that it takes time to arrive at a decision on important matters, but that it finds it hard to decide quickly in an emergency. Hard, but not impossible. The speed by which some recent decisions were reached in England by a Parliament possessing all its powers compares favourably with anything a totalitarian State can show. Celerity and smoothness of action are not the only political virtues.

The five freedoms set out by the President are these ; freedom from fear of bombs, freedom of knowledge and information, freedom of religion, freedom of expression, and freedom from want. Certainly nations cannot go about their ordinary business with serene minds when at any moment they may be assailed by bombers moving at 300 m.p.h. To keep perpetually on guard against this

is a strain on the attention and a diversion of energy that would be useful for positive achievement. Freedom of information, religion and expression are found, if imperfectly, in democracies. In these men can find the relief of angry speech when they are angry, they are not persecuted for their methods of worship, they can say and write what they think, with small limitations. In these spheres social approval and disapproval is relied on to do what the State does in some other forms of political organization, often ruthlessly.

Freedom from want has nowhere been assured. The old economics dealt with the distribution of goods in a world where commodities fell short of needs. The new economics, whose study has hardly begun, deals with distribution in a world that is competent to produce whatever is needed but has not learnt to distribute it and is forced to destroy a great deal of what it labours to produce. For want in general the natural remedy was long thought to be a distribution of commodities and materials by a system of international trade depending on ever improving communications. Nationalism, however, has interfered with this. Every country seeks within its powers to develop its industries as well as its agriculture, to

reserve its home market for itself and to build up an export trade, ambitions which have brought the world to confusion. Here again fear steps in to determine conduct. There is point in the argument that the "have-not" countries should be permitted their proper share of the world's natural products. But also there is point in the complaint that while Italy was getting ready for war with Britain she was piling up metals and oils and other munitions from the Empire to use against it when she decided to take the plunge. When peoples (or Governments) are all good and peaceful there will be no need to fear the purposes of their trade; and when there is no fear all peoples will be peaceful and content. Where is the beginning to be made ?

It would be a much happier world in which these five freedoms existed. Human life would be on a level that it has never touched. Their existence as a characteristic of human life everywhere would imply among other changes the end of the aspiration to dominate, to make others think as you do, to say only what pleases you. This aspiration is strong at present, and has to be met with resolution if any of the freedoms are to survive. Otherwise the world's peace will be the

sort of peace that the Romans were accused of establishing: "They make a solitude, they call it peace." Where men cannot speak or write or worship as they please for fear of spies and punishment, however crowded the land, they must live in a solitude.

Shakespeare and the War.

THAT SHAKESPEARE is the stuff for war time is a view not confined to those whose vernacular tongue is his. Not long ago we drew attention to his *King John* as a piece of insight into such a time as this. Others have emphasized the inspiration and comfort to be found in other plays. He looked at life wholly and greatly, and something of his vision is to be found in all he wrote. Mr. G. Wilson Knight, who is a professor of English at Toronto, has published through Blackwell of Oxford the substance of a lecture he recently gave in London and Cheltenham (*This Sceptred Isle*. One shilling), in which he brings together a considerable amount of thought and knowledge appropriate to this time.

Shakespeare, and the tongue he used, flowered together. The Armada was part of the cause. Its defeat gave the English a new excitement and a new life, as the victory over the Persian invaders at Marathon quickened the Athenian character and sowed the seed of great achievements

in many fields. England is an island. That is a large part of its history; of the thoughts and feelings of its people. When they felt their unity and the assurance of a great future after the defeat of the Spaniard Shakespeare spoke for them, and to him the nation goes back again and again in its hours of deep emotion. He is an inspirer, a lover of his own people; but because he loved them he was a stern critic. They must be worthy of their opportunity.

Nought shall make us rue

If England to itself do rest but true.

There is, he felt, a compulsion laid on England not only to attain and maintain unity, but to be in a deep way true to herself. Much that he wrote was merely declamation to please the ears of the groundlings at the play; but much is the sincere voice of what was the best in the land.

Years of indecision ! England has had them. In *Henry VI* is a famous passage that begins

Among the soldiers this is muttered

That you maintain several factions:

And, whilst a field should be dispatch'd and fought

You are disputing of your generals

and includes the appeal "Awake, awake, English nobility." A few lines later comes Hastings' comment on policy:

"Tis better using France than trusting France.
Let us be backed with God and with the seas
And with this help only defend ourselves;
And in them and in ourselves our safety lies.

Those seas, the silver sea, the moat defensive, of dying John of Gaunt made a large part of Shakespeare as they have made a large part of the national character.

Royalty too is a great force. We see it indecisive and failing in *Richard II* lofty in *Henry V*, uncertain and malevolent in *Richard III*. The King's authority is divine only when it is used in honourable and commanding fashion.

As King so people. They must act greatly when danger comes or right has to be preserved. Not only in the historical plays are these lessons taught. In *Macbeth*, as in *Richard III*, is a study of usurped authority, of false pretences, of character that fails under the consciousness of falseness. Scotland, like Europe to-day, becomes a land of senseless horrors, until young Malcolm wins his rightful inheritance.

For the soldier's life Shakespeare had a fine feeling. Many characters show it; especially Henry V and Othello and Coriolanus. But war

purpose, some deep faith. An archbishop in armour is reproved. Timon of Athens rails on war's cruelty and folly. Success, power won by it, are unsubstantial and unsatisfying. The whole doctrine of high place is given in four lines of *Henry VI*.

My crown is in my heart, not on my head:
Not decked with diamonds and Indian stones.
Nor to be seen: my crown is called content:
A crown it is that seldom kings enjoy.

Of this lovely thought his last play, *Henry VIII*, is an expansion. National greatness, personal tragedy the general service, at whatever cost and sacrifice, of the country's welfare are its theme, a welfare in which King is hardly separable from State. There may be read the great words of Wolsey on his fall; also the prophetic words of Cranmer when christening the babe Elizabeth:

Holy and heavenly thoughts still counsel her :
She shall be loved and fear'd her own shall bless her,
Her foes shake like a field of beaten corn
And hang their heads with sorrow, good grows with
her.

In her days every man shall eat in safety
Under his own vine what he plants: and sing.
The merry songs of peace to all his neighbours.

To this noble voice men can listen and feel better

for it. The test is stern to-day. Yet the national response is one that Shakespeare would have been proud to write of. The moat defensive has lost something of its protective virtue. The spirit built up behind it persists. If the nation proves true to the best in it and the best in its past, to Shakespeare is due some of the credit. In him in their trial men and women can find sustaining wisdom and power.

Strength for the Struggle.

WHO says we in India are a stay-at-home people? Let him go and see the exodus that has been taking place these several days from the termini of Calcutta and railway stations elsewhere. There it is apparent that war has had little effect upon normal nomadic tendencies. Holiday-makers are leaving the city in about as great numbers as ever, and with as evident enjoyment.

Such visits as multitudes are now set upon cannot be effected without effort. The question "Where shall we go?" may arouse such debate even in the best ordered households as to cast a cloud over the holiday. That point no sooner settled, however, than there is packing to be faced. Just how much of the ward-robe to take or how many companions of the book-shelves should go are matters which admit of nice judgment and selection. Thereafter the problem of fitting the favoured articles into suddenly incommensurable trunks calls for patience and exactitude. Even those fortunate males who have wives or other

creatures of domestic servitude to help them may not be free of the fear that certain treasures left to the mercies of these less sympathetic proxies may find no place in the bulging trunks. Never far off also is the thought that in too few days from now the whole process must be gone through in reverse, and the briefly liberated personality put back into the circumspection and confine of a working day's drab routine. Holidays, further, carry within them the seeds of their own decay, for indulgence takes the gilt off novelty. And next month some may have cause to rue the drain now being permitted on slim purses.

Yet to see the nomadic hordes which crowd the termini now is to know that these problems and responsibilities have been gladly and eagerly shouldered as the price of a journey. A holiday is one of those moments in life (in greater degree than, for instance, the first moments of wakefulness at morning) when man renews that consciousness of himself as an entity apart from his fellows. It is a kind of apotheosis of the individual. For eleven months perhaps in the year he is confined to the "dry drudgery of the desk's dead wood," a cog in some impersonal, commercial or official machine driven by the hard need

of livelihood to work in a sphere in which he perhaps has scant interest. For as long he is at the beck in varying measure of the State, the business associations to which he belongs, his superiors and the conventions that bind around the social fabric in which he moves. But now is the hour of his liberation. For one week or a fortnight (what matter, it is all too short) he will be rid of these fretful inhibitions; free (in the compass of true freedom) to do what he pleases, when he pleases, how he pleases. In the new world in which he is now to have a fleeting existence he can attain to the benefits of that millennium of which philosophers have dreamed: when authority ceases because there is no need for it.

Who will deny that such consciousness of individuality is the very lifeblood of the struggle we are now waging against the propounders of that other philosophy of State-worship and brute force which darkens half the world with its deadly shadow to-day? Such realization of self cannot but yield a truer appreciation of the political and social ideals which permit its expression in word and deed. Of the many defects that by accident and design have been superimposed on the political structure born of those

ideals most are well aware. We may chafe at the slowness with which the reforms that are to root out these evils are devised and put into motion. But the hopes and possibilities for improvement which this same system offers are there for those who care to see them; and as a background which keeps our grievance (real or fancied) from losing perspective is the sure knowledge that each of us, if we please, may have some share in the fashioning of those reforms. Holidays therefore are of special significance in these times since they serve in some degree as reminders that though it is in the nature of man to live gregariously he is, notwithstanding, a free agent, whose individual right to moral and physical welfare, far from being subordinate to that of the community or any section of it, is the foremost concern of the collective life. Let us enter upon them, therefore, grateful for the respite from work they will afford; let us return from them girt to play each his part in the struggle of civilization against the dark forces that threaten the freedoms which can make life a rich experience.

A call to knit.

FROM time to time a little information is published about working parties and what they do. It is important also to remember what they do not do. They do not do enough to meet needs. Those in the parties work hard enough. The criticism is that with so much to be done to keep soldiers and sailors and airmen supplied with the necessary comforts that do not emerge from official policy and budgets there are not working parties enough, nor members enough of those that have established themselves.

The other day in our columns the Consul for Greece acknowledged "a magnificent donation of hospital supplies from the Bengal Joint War Committee." It may be encouraging to the general public, as well as to all Red Cross and similar working parties, to say something of the variety of the gifts already sent to the Hellenic Red Cross. The list includes every kind of hospital wearing apparel and comforts, bed linen and ward accessories, bandages and theatre accesso-

ries. Twenty-seven large packing cases were sent; in each was a card saying, "The hospital supplies in this box were made and given to the Hellenic Red Cross by the women Red Cross workers of Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, the Punjab, the Eastern States, the Andaman Islands, and the East Indian Railway and the Bengal-Nagpur Railway centres." The material worked up into these supplies cost Rs. 10,000; replacement value is far in advance of that, as prices have gone up. What the value of the gift is to Greek sufferers in hospitals cannot be computed.

Nor is this all. Last month 37 large packing cases of knitted woollen comforts were sent to Bombay for the Army in Egypt, where British and Indian soldiers are doing fine things. This month all hands are on deck to prepare and get away Christmas parcels to men on service. Withal, the ordinary peace time work continues without diminution. Those who are active are full of zeal. But they want recruits and allies to help in the great task. Fingers that can knit will be welcomed in multitudes all over the country, for Red Cross and other parties; as a substitute for morning bridge and mahjong we are assured, it is better than satisfying. So great is the need

for woollen garments that the Red Cross is giving free wool this month to anyone who will knit it, with instructions how to.

British men are suspected of not liking knitting women. If this suspicion exists it probably is to be explained by *les tricoteuses*, the hags who knitted around the guillotine in Robespierre's day, by the many women who have made husbands and brothers hold the wool for winding, and by the generous incompetents whom *Punch* hit off in a Christmas verse not long ago :

My love has knitted a purple tie
Of a kind that is sure to catch the eye.
Some of it's purl, some of it plain.
And she dropped a stitch just now and again.
Men must work, it once was said,
But now it's the women who work instead
And the men who weep, for the worst of it
Is that they must wear what the women knit.

But that looks to the standards of the piping days of peace. In war men are not so critical. They give blessings for something warm, even if it has a dropped or wrong stitch. British and Indian soldiers in the African desert, Greeks in the cold and rain and blizzards of Albania, fighting men in hospitals, can have their sufferings made more tolerable by woollen comforts from

India. Nor is it a sufficient explanation for abstention if, as some have assured us, wool is not always easy to get. In war time both patience and contrivance are called for throughout the Empire, and if wool and knitting needles are not to be found in the first shop visited, they may be in the forty-ninth. So the call goes out from those who in different parts of India keep working parties busy; "all hands to the needles." It may have been noticed that in the list given above of places that have done something to ease the lot of the wounded Greek soldier several provinces and hundreds of States are not included. Husbands are not likely to object to knitting wives in this crisis; and if there is danger of having to hold the skeins they can always slip out to drill.

The Women's Lead.

ONE of the brightest spots on India's horizon for some years past has been the direction taken by what is called the Women's Movement. The emancipated, educated women who lead the movement have been, of course, primarily concerned with the status and condition of their less fortunate sisters, the spread of literacy and higher education, the securing of fundamental rights and liberties, the improvement of hygiene and the teaching of mothercraft. But these leaders have by their personalities obtained an influence that goes far beyond their movement. There are many who have expressed disappointment at the results of widespread university education for men. We have heard of none who have expressed dissatisfaction with the results of the far from widespread higher education of women. The percentage of success, if by success is meant the creation of individuality, personality, independent thinking, combined with the manners that spring from warm sympathies and real respect for the

individualities of others, is clearly far higher in the case of women than of men. Avoiding the militant methods of the British suffragette of 30 years ago the emancipated Indian woman prefers to charm her way along by sweet reasonableness. But that sweet reasonableness is accompanied by the courage of her opinions and by a directness of perception and refusal to be sidetracked from the point which is often lacking in men. Religious fanaticism leaves them cold. They refuse to have their women's movement tangled up with any Hindu-Moslem controversy and work together for India even when in some other capacity they have party affiliations.

Madame Chiang Kai-shek has lately been reminding us how essential a part Chinese women have played in China's magnificent resistance. Probably, indeed they are its cause and its mainspring. Twenty years ago the Chinese were rated far below Indians in all warlike respects. It was commonly believed that there was no courage anywhere and that patriotism did not exist. A Chinese soldier was pictured as a venal and cowardly bandit, a terror to unarmed people, but himself a dummy soldier in the service of some predatory war lord, willing to change sides

at any moment for pay. But the higher education of women had been advancing on a scale much bigger than was then possible in a more conservative India free from revolution and war. In China, as in India, women made better use of education being, indeed, more apt for civilization than men. Women like Madame Sun Yat-sen and her sister, Madame Chiang Kai-shek, stand out as creators of the national spirit, but behind them were a whole new generation of women with fervent hearts and steeled wills determined, come what might, that the nation should be reborn.

Now when all is at stake for India we look confidently to the leaders of India's womanhood to do for their country what the educated women of China did for theirs. We are glad to note that Mrs. Sarojini Naidu has been speaking winged words to slothful men, to slogan shouters, windbags, statement-wallahs and panic purveyors. The women of India will prove, in Lady Linlithgow's phrase, the steel of India. In these days of preparation for a grim ordeal we have seen nothing better said or with a more authentic stamp of leadership than Lady Linlithgow's address to a women's meeting.

Here is the final passage: "At this present time, when we read in the news of constant setbacks and withdrawals, let us realize that China has had to face setbacks and withdrawals for four-and-a-half years, but her spirit is as great as ever and her faith in final victory is unshaken. So must our faith be. Some of you may have seen and those who have not seen may have read of the many processes through which the finest tempered steel has to go. It is submitted to tremendous heat which reduces it to a liquid form from which it emerges, after much hammering, fit to stand up to the most exhaustive tests. Let us, women of India, be this steel. If we have to be submitted to the fire and to the hammering, let us see to it that we emerge purified and undaunted. We have to find this spirit within ourselves as the women of China have found it. Pray God that India may be spared 'the horrors of invasion, but if the test comes the women of India, like their Chinese sisters, will not quail and remember always that for as long as I am in India I consider myself as one of you. Look in your heart, make inquisition there of service done in this supreme hour of hours.'"

Speaking in Public.

ADDRESSING an Oriental society the other day Sir Andrew Calcecott, Ceylon's Governor, read to his audience Bacon's essay on "Studies." This was calculated courtesy. He wished to give them something good, and explained his choice of matter. For some time, it appeared, he had with the help of black and red ink and red and blue pencils given himself up to the study of public speeches. With the black ink he crossed out all pure formality. With the red he eliminated all platitudes and woodenness of expression. With the red pencil he got rid of verbiage and windiness, with the blue of all repetition. What was left was in general so little that, apparently suspicious of his own capacities, he preferred to rely on Bacon's when he met the society.

The pleasant humour was probably enjoyed and the little lesson in it appreciated. Yet is it not possible that Sir Andrew was more than a little unfair on speakers, whether *extempore* or of the diligent kind who take so great pains to

prepare what they say that it smells strongly of the lamp? It is a common saying that the speech which reads well probably was a bad one. Speaker and writer have not the same conditions to face. The latter has greater freedom, for since the reader can read him at his own pace and read over and over again, the writer need not waste words or prolong what he wishes to say out of consideration for the reader. The speaker has a different task. Whatever style of speaking he chooses, he must be bound by the consideration that he wants to be listened to and understood as he goes along. His words are present to the ears once and for all; once past them, they cannot be brought back to them, though they may be recovered for the eyes.

Therefore a speaker may have to repeat himself, to pad out his sentences, to use platitudes, to be windy, if he is to keep an audience's attention. Some can do this in one way, some another. Different speakers use different gifts. But no man can succeed on the platform if his language is always precise and compact, for unless what he has to say is of the dimensions of an oration he will be done before his hearers have settled comfortably in their seats

and begun to lend him their ears. No general rules can be laid down, but repetition and padding may on occasion be the essence of sensible speaking since speech that moves along too quickly for the listeners is useless and may be irritating.

Bacon did not pad and repeat in his essays. But could he have held the attention of an ordinary public meeting by delivering one of them as a speech? We doubt it, for ordinary meetings are not composed entirely of men trained in fine use of language or men of fine intelligence. All sorts make an audience, so all sorts of mannerisms may help to make a speech effective. It is useful to bear in mind the two criteria of speech, whether it is good to hear, and whether it reads well. In leisurely days leisurely methods were popular, such as the busy world has now no time for. But even Burke, whom we read with profit and enjoyment, spoke often to empty benches in the Commons. Macaulay's speeches often showed the hard labour that had gone to their making. John Bright commented: "When I speak I cut boldly across from headland to headland. But Gladstone follows the coast line in its every indentation and when he comes to a

river he cannot resist the temptation to follow it to its source."

It is well that there are different ways of addressing an audience; too much of one thing gets boring. Some of the world's greatest orators have been windy. Others have had the straightforward simplicity of Demosthenes. Preachers in Anglican churches have been known to tell their congregation that the sermon about to be preached was one of the famous Dr. Spurgeon's, "as it is much better than anything I could hope to write," while a Nonconformist divine, after openly preaching a sermon of an Archbishop of Canterbury, has been known to surprise his audience by absent-mindedly closing with "God bless these few and feeble remarks."

To compare Bacon, read in quiet leisure, with a humdrum address of politician of to-day may be more than a little unkind. Few speeches to-day are meant to be show pieces; neither speaker nor hearer has time for that. The question that must be asked is, does the speaker hold his hearers' attention, does he get into their ears and minds what he has to say? Herodotus, we know, gathered crowds round him at the

Greek games when he read out his charming history. An English man of letters has wondered what manner of success Bishop Stubbs would have had had he read from his Select Charters at Epsom or Ascot. Even Bacon at his best would compete badly for attention when Mohammedan Sporting play Mohan Bagan, or when anyone of a hundred popular leaders, whatever the technical defects to be found in his speech, expounds in public the wickedness of a Government or party.

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Sky Pilots.

IF one were asked to name the most characteristic feature of the English or European countryside, probably the first that would leap to one's mind would be the peaceful parish church, nestling among old oaks or vineyards, thatched roofs, stepped Dutch gables or shuttered seventeenth century French provincial houses, and its kindly, hardworking person, whether Roman, Anglican, Calvinist or Huguenot, busying himself with the simple affairs of his simple parishioners. Here is a man, one would say, with his feet firmly fixed upon the ground. His thoughts are of peace not of war; he speels "canon" with one "n," the "dilapidations" deducted from his meagre stipend are for repairs to his chancel and vicarage, not traceable to the ravages of battle; the West Wall is for him not a fortification but the place near which you find the front. If he ever takes wing it is but in his soaring imagination, and his descent is gentle, the descent of the dove.

Now all is changed, all changed utterly; a terrible beauty is born. From the clear and golden skies descends a vast concourse of clergymen, their coat tails ballooning in the breeze. But woe to him who assumes that they come as the doves of peace. His friendly greeting is answered in strange Teutonic accents, hoarse and peremptory, or perhaps by action even harsher and less becoming to the cloth. His celestial visitants carry not breviaries but phrase books, whence they laboriously cull their questions about the size of the local police force or the whereabouts of the key to the cash box. Their round clergymen's hats have a hard metallic look about them, and under their frock-coats there is often a most unclerical bulge over the hip pocket. The humble countryman, who had always accepted priests as part of the landscape, now anxiously scans the horizon for raiding clergymen. Whereas formerly he would have greeted them with friendliness and deference, to-day his first impulse is to phone for the gendarmerie.

Familiar as one is with the expression "sky pilot" as applied to the clergy, it must nevertheless be extremely disconcerting when they

actually sprout wings. When a bishop descends upon his diocese that in normal times is a comparatively staid affair; few are accustomed to expect an episcopal visitation direct from the heavens. A rural dean is usually one who surveys his deanery by more commonplace methods than aerial patrol. Much has been said about curate's eggs, but they have hitherto, though sometimes noxious, seldom been explosive. Disconcerting as the new dispensation must be to the ordinary civilian population, it will be even more so to the regular clergy who have not yet aspired to such heights. Instead of the customary friendly hail of their parishioners, they are now receiving the brusque challenge of sentries. Their cloth is no longer their passport, but must be backed by severely scrutinized papers of identity. In some districts it is regrettably possible that the clergy have been fired at on sight.

We have been given to understand by the German High Command that their parachutists are wearing the regular uniform of the service. One presumes that the performance is sufficiently artistic for officers to be clothed in a manner appropriate to their degree; thus there would be gaiters for the company officers, top hats

with strings for battalion commanders and possibly red cardinal's hats for brigadiers. We do not know whether detachments detailed for foreign service are equipped in a manner suitable for the spiritual climate: if so there would be Brethren for Plymouth and Waldenses for the Canton of Vaud. Should the campaign spread eastwards, robes of a delicate saffron would be increasingly in demand. The General Staff is no doubt appropriately renamed "Foreign Missions," Dr. Goebbels has almost certainly accepted the post of Vicar-General, while General Goering will hardly have neglected to assume the appropriate canonicals. It is possible that at first the sergeant-majors will have some trouble in teaching recruits the correct tying of an amice and the vestments proper to the season. But we may be sure no pains will be spared.

Whether the mission will be successful is another matter. With sorrow and pain the Nazis have seen so many attempts to convert an erring world go sadly awry. It would not be strange if this too were rejected by a stiff-necked and stubborn generation, obstinately preferring to remain in *partibus infidelium*—among the number of the unconverted.

Church Bells.

CHURCH bells, it is announced in London, are no longer to be rung in England except upon the orders of the civil defence forces to give warning of the descent of parachute troops. Thus an ancient function that of sounding the alarm in case of public danger, is to be restored to them, possibly for the first time since Prince Charles Edward came over the border in 1745. The English are one of the few Christian peoples who have not heard the sound of the tocsin within living memory. Americans heard it as recently as the Civil War. While on the Continent of Europe many a man must have heard its grim notes several times in his life. In the Balkans and Eastern Europe the sound of church bells is often the only means of conveying a warning to the civil population. For over a thousand years church bells have served to inform and rally Christian populations in times of danger. They warned England of the descent of the Danes in the ninth and tenth

centuries. It is only fitting that, if ever the modern barbarian descends upon her coasts, they should give warning again.

The more normal use of church bells, that of calling to services, is a much narrowed down use of an equally ancient function. Before clocks and watches came into general use, church bells, by ringing out the ecclesiastical "hours," were the main means by which the ordinary man could roughly tell the time. This function, also, was not merely ecclesiastical but concerned the civil authority; the curfew, for example, tolled "the knell of parting day" primarily as a police measure, to announce the shutting of town gates for protection against robbery or assault by night. Perhaps the twin functions of the church bell are referred to at the end of the well-known nursery rhyme "The Bells of St. Clements:

"Here comes a candle to light you to bed

"And here comes a chopper to chop off your
head."

—the latter being at the present a rather grim suggestion.

It has been aptly pointed out that those who deplore the noise of a modern city, and compare it with the supposed calm of mediæval

London or Paris, are indulging a romantic and quite unjustifiable nostalgia for the past. In fact medieval London was probably very nearly as noisy as London to-day. Not merely must the clatter of hooves and wooden cart wheels on cobblestones have been almost as noisy as the continuous stream of modern traffic; not merely did every shop loudly cry its wares, while street vendors contributed to the din: but one of the chief offenders were the church bells. At prime and hours, elevation or curfew, bells from dozens of City churches must have rendered the air strident with their clangour. At Louvain University it was the custom for that college from which a student headed the graduation list to ring its bell continuously for three days and nights.

Even to-day the fact that church bells are as Froude remarked, perhaps the only genuine survival of the Middle Ages does not entirely, to some minds, compensate for the noise they frequently make. Now-a-days, when public clocks abound and most men possess or have access to reliable time-pieces, it may seem unnecessary for the faithful to be so stridently reminded of the hours of church services; those

who intend to go to church can surely be expected to know the time, while to those who do not the clamour is rather a nuisance than a reproach. Moreover not all men are equipped to appreciate, nor all ringers to execute, the complicated intellectual manœuvres of change ringing. But even those who most appreciate the new stillness which has fallen in British parishes would not willingly see the bells silent for ever; at the very least they will expect and desire a merry peal of gladness when the war is brought to a successful conclusion.

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Strain in the Army.

NOR long ago a humorous artist gave his idea of what London is today. The scene was a moving staircase at one of the railway stations. On it, going up and down, was a crowd of men and women of a variety of ranks in a variety of uniforms, all saluting and trying to look several ways at once at those whom they were saluting. The strain was obvious in the picture. It has at last been realized that the artist was not exuberant in imagination. The British public, which is abundantly in uniform, has now broken out into impolite criticism of the amount of saluting that falls to the unhappy soldier of either sex in England's streets today. With a few million men in uniform the strain is great. Wherever a soldier is there is sure to be some one to salute and be saluted by.

Therefore the Army Council is being advised by many and sundry to save the nation's defenders from this awful strain. It is physically impossible to return all the salutes. Army

officers complain; and to walk about with the right hand perpetually half an inch above the right eyebrow tends to make man or woman feel awkward and conspicuous. Yet salutes must be given and returned, and they must be given properly and smartly. Every drill sergeant impresses that on the young recruit, and there is no relaxation. A man may not, for example, knock off for the day when he has put in a prescribed number of salutes. Nor can he confine them to a working week of 50 or 60 hours. The duty is everlasting and imperative. Besides the boredom and physical strain there is the danger from lop-sided physical development. In the days when either hand was used according to the position of the officer saluted this was avoided. But thousands of salutes a day with the right hand may easily lead to muscle-bound right arm and shoulder. There will be general sympathy, in the Army and outside, with the view that something must be done about it. How are men and women to get on with their war work when so much of their time and energy is spent on routine courtesies ?

One answer is obvious. Yet it has been found in practice not to work. In a democratic

army, it is contended the need for these courtesies is not felt, let men get on with their jobs, never mind appearances. One of the most democratic armies the world has seen was the International Brigade at Madrid. There, as they shaped their army out of rough cosmopolitan material, they found that badges of rank and their recognition helped to bring order out of chaos in barracks as in the field. The problem is one that will test the capacity of the Army Council. It would be a memorable triumph if a new method of saluting were evolved in the middle of a great war, as it was when a new method of turning about was perfected in the middle of World War I. Perhaps a hint may be borrowed from the direction indicators on cars. Something of the kind might be affixed to soldiers of all ranks, so that a salute can be given and returned by touching a switch at the belt. Some American Presidents are rumoured to have saved their arms by some such contrivance. When thousands of hands had to be shaken at a convention they would stand by pleasantly smiling while an artificial arm and hand welcomed the oncomer.

A Casualty.

AMONG the seriously wounded on the war front is the British male's habit of dressing for dinner. It will recover, but some time is likely to pass before convalescence begins. To the stern virtue of getting into fresh clothes unstained by the day's toil, for dinner, the Briton abroad is supposed to cling tenaciously. It is part of his national religion and pride of race, or perhaps of class. Beloved, if legendary, is the explorer who in the jungle always turned up for his monkey soup and roast alligator in stiff shirt and tails; horrifying the version in which he lost his only collar stud and had to keep collar and shirt together with a bit of jungle fibre. For the habit it may be said that after a day's work in heat and dirt it is health-giving to body and soul to get clean (and, if it may be cool) in leisurely fashion.

Within the custom habits have changed. There was a time in India when stiff shirt and white tie were essential parts in the ritual of

dining whether out or at home. A descent came to the days when the more comfortable and less dignified dinner jacket with black tie began to be permissible if no ladies were at table and no elders who didn't know what the world was coming to with these new manners. When invitations came, if they were stylishly printed all knew that ladies would be present. Otherwise an invitation sent men anxiously nosing about to find out in good time whether ladies were expected; failing this intelligence guests would turn up in one rig, with servant waiting outside with another. The agony of a man who turned out in black tie on a white tie evening has been among the Empire's tragedies: even elderly archæologists with beards to the waist have suffered terribly on finding that they have been guilty of this solecism.

But now the moral fibre of the Briton has become unbraced. It has not been enough that in the post-war years when ideals were low men sank, and were permitted to sink, to soft shirts and even soft collars for dinner. They are now too busy, they find, to change at all just to eat. Language of this kind betrays a lamentable falling off. There are excuses, and men have them all

at the tongue's tip. In war it is a crime to waste time in trivialities. They may at any moment be called from the dinner table to war or civic duties, perhaps to dirty jobs; these are many, dinner suits are generally in the singular. Are not soldiers always in khaki? Is not their example the right one? For all these reasons the odds are against the man who would like to be virtuous and cling to the exalted standards of living set up by his grandfather, who would have felt horribly unclean and contaminating had he not leisurely prepared himself for dinner and talk.

In general men do not resist excuses for being slack. When the war ends, they murmur we shall turn back to the old ways. It is left therefore to women to keep up the standards, which they do with ease and pleasure. For unlike men they usually have more than one dinner dress, they have a taste for variety in clothes, they will keep going where the men fail. If men come down to dungarees at all times, women may be trusted to compensate by their brightness and be all the more resplendent in contrast. Dungarees are not the worst possibility. A modern philosopher of clothes has prophesied that we

are all, men and women together, on the way to one standardized dress for all, fashioned out of brown paper, as the nadir that must be reached before the human race enters the next phase in the history of clothing.

Men, Women and Clothes.

MAN, or the majority of such creatures, is seldom so happy as when free to go about in old clothes. The coat with the frayed collar or the much-patched trouser hold for him a charm that no newly-tailored suit can inspire. Indeed, the thought of renewing his wardrobe appeals him. At heart he is a rebel against the dictate of a self-constituted society which prescribes a particular garment for a particular occasion. Dressing for show he holds to be an infernal nuisance, and if he conforms to what is to him a meaningless pattern, it is because he is an easy-going person pathetic in his dread of the certain domestic storm and public ridicule which any "eccentricity" would bring down upon his inoffensive head.

The war is bringing to civilian males in Britain a welcome reprieve from an exacting and exasperating convention. Clothes rationing severely limits man's outlay on the adornment of his person. Utility, durability and, of course,

comfort are now the standards which may guide him in exchanging paper coupons (plus cash) for tweeds and flannels and linen. Sports clothes appeal to him most. They exude friendliness and may be something else: they are roomy and comfortable. They do not call for the streamlined waist, the absurdly padded shoulder or the constricted neck of more formal attire. So he wears sports clothes to office, at dinner or the theatre, anywhere, and is content.

Not so his feminine counterpart. To look her best under all circumstances is her high endeavour; to provide colour and form for an otherwise dreary existence. That, indeed, is a commendable role and worthily she fills it. It is a familiar but true paradox that woman spends more on wearing less than her opposite number and spends more time in doing so. But feminine fripperies and aids to beauty are now necessarily less varied in the diversity of their eccentricity than in pre-war days. Former manufacturers of silk stockings are filling shell cases; milliners have switched over to the fashioning of tin hats; beauty experts possibly to the mass production of that delicate confection, the gas mask. These limitations, however, leave the fair sex but little

dismayed; their ingenuity is almost equal to the new emergency.

A booklet published in Britain entitled "Change" gives the results of mass observation into the effects of clothes-rationing, during two months. The most noteworthy feature is the abandon with which women are using up their year's allowance of coupons. To the superficial this two-fisted extravagance would appear inexcusable, but the fair shoppers smile in the comforting knowledge that they can always draw on their men-folks' unexpended coupons. These may be especially welcome as the year advances and fashion's whims outdate the present up-to-the-minute *ensembles*. The constitutional sluggishness of mere man in these matters is thus peculiarly fortunate. To salve any tweaks of conscience upon the subject, woman may reason thus: "Boys up to 19 are too busy learning or playing to bother about tailoring; men from 20 to 40 are now decked in the finest of all clothes, the King's uniform; the middle-aged and the old are obviously long past clothes consciousness." The classification may be arbitrary; but it is at least essentially feminine and for that reason final and unchallengeable. In the result, man is

allowed a new freedom in choosing his modest wardrobe, woman calmly helps herself to his surplus coupons, indulgent authority turns a blind eye on the irregularity, and all are happy.

New Words.

THIS war like the last war has brought new words into use. Some of these may find permanent lodgment in the English language; others may not. It has often happened that, after a decade's hard use, some words suddenly lapse into obscurity to be brought back into currency generations later. But even those that survive need to be guarded against misuse.

Words remain vivid so long as the metaphor or imagery behind them is remembered. When the imagery is forgotten, the life in the word or phrase is dead; and it rapidly becomes a *cliche*. This happened to the phrases that many English poets in the eighteenth century used, so that a special "poetic diction" arose. Mechanically used, they inspired no feeling in those who read them. The poets and essayists of the Romantic Movement killed them and taught writers to use the English language with freshness of thought, emotion and vision. The stiff formality of eighteenth century English died towards the end of

that century, sporadic attempts to revive it never succeeded. The end of the nineteenth century saw a new "poetic diction" arising from the mechanical use of expressions which had been used with feeling by the Pre-Raphaelite school. Ridicule killed it. In our own times "poetic diction" is sometimes seen, but the greater evil is the temptation to short-circuit the process of thinking and to use words, not so much to convey the writer's own thought or feeling, as to exploit the sensational quality they may have, as a new importation into language.

Blitz and *quisling*, both not quite three years old, are already sometimes used without a full understanding of the imagery behind them. *Camouflage*, which came with the last war, has been often misused. The trouble with some new words is that they drive beautiful old words temporarily out of use. "Bad money turns out good money." Not all new words have however the manners of the upstart. Most have a right to be used and kept in active circulation until the imagery behind them is dead. A few years' hectic existence does them and language itself good.

Concise English.

MR. CHURCHILL has made a heroic suggestion. It is that his Ministers and their assistants should write less on their files. Many a man feels that unless he spreads himself he will make a poor impression on his superiors and a poor showing to posterity when the files are printed and stored on public shelves. This latter fear at least is unjustified. A people that has detective stories to read and the pictures to look at is not likely to spend much of its leisure in turning up old papers to see what Mr. J. B. Robinson wrote in 1940. Not all men are expansive on office files or departmental note paper. It is recorded of one head of an Education Department that on a long note of 20 or 30 typed pages he had but one comment to make, when on an estimate of land required of a building scheme which came to a certain number of acres, he noted in the margin, "square acres meant, I presume."

It has to be admitted that many men have risen to fame and prosperity in the Services, in India as elsewhere, for their skill in writing reports and other documents, on which afterwards nothing may have been done. Just as a

Government finds good use for a man who with ready speech puts its case persuasively, so a man who can make things look well and hopeful on paper has his utility, and deserves his reward. Few of these use simple language. That would not look well; it might be taken to suggest that the readers could not understand hard words. The annual report that used to be prepared in India, known as "India in—," was in essence the story of India told simply so as to bring it within the comprehension of Parliament, though it would not have been tactful to say so. Mr. Churchill's pursuit of brief and simple language (which he does not always use himself) is to be commended. A saving of time, paper, energy, ink is at all times to be approved. The only serious argument against it is that of the school who maintain that, since what men do is generally wrong, procedure that keeps them talking or writing much and doing little should never be interfered with.

In India on official files we have the stately language established for them by Macaulay, or as near an imitation as the man of today can achieve. There are men indifferent to fine traditions who write to a superior "For orders," instead of "At this stage the various suggestions in the

preceding pages may perhaps be considered and orders be given that the approved proposals be implemented without delay." In a climate like this it is to marvel at that modern forms of speech have so little invaded official language. No Government, so far as we know, has announced its intention of muscling in on something, or of taking up a new stunt, or of stamping on the Opposition's toes. But now that Mr. Churchill calls for simpler and fewer and less woolly words, such idioms may come in, for they mean something, whereas a statement that so many aeroplanes have accrued has been discovered to mean nothing. Language of the woolly kind has been developed especially by two influences by philosophers discussing the Absolute and the Eternal, and by Governments who have to answer questions without giving information. In Parliament woolly language may still be advisable. But on a file in war time the less said the better, so that it gets the results. As Mr. Churchill has courteously pointed out to his Ministers, if they set their notes out more clearly they will think better. And there is no sign of a rebellion in the Cabinet,

Brought to Notice.

GOVERNMENTS in India Provincial or Central according to their announcements, keep having their attention drawn to this and that so-and-so, their communiques and Press notes rather querulously say, has been brought to their notice. The suggestion thus conveyed (whether intentionally or not who knows ?) is either that they cannot see for themselves, or think that to admit publicly to endowment with anything so humdrum as normal eyesight would be undignified. Governments, the phrasing indicates, are sleepy or myopic bodies, preoccupied with affairs so elevated above common human ken that they need much nudging by assiduous underlings before bringing themselves to heed what is happening in the vulgar world without; unnudged, they would treat the people's affairs as beneath a glance.

"It has been brought to the notice of Government," declared the authorities, in a militarily and otherwise somewhat harassed Province a few

days ago, that although certain essential commodities are reaching it in fair amount by rail or ship, much of what arrives does not get to the retail markets, and is "evidently being disposed of surreptitiously to unscrupulous persons." The public, upon whom the consequences of this market-shortage impinge in diverse inconvenient ways, had had the same bright thought weeks ago, and have since been commenting on it often and loudly. A day before, New Delhi proclaimed having had brought to its notice that occupants of requisitioned land are eager for assurances about prospects of its eventual relinquishment. Others than Government had earlier heard about and pondered this awkward problem too. Indeed some of the public will be kind enough to believe, despite repetitions of a form of words implying otherwise, that the Central and Provincial Governments in these times know quite a lot about what happens, and are less somnolent, shortsighted and superior than their Press notes imply. Why they should foster the implication is an enigma; we bring it to their notice.

What is due ?

SO-and-so "in due course," or "after due consideration," will happen. The imprecise adjective, the vaguely complacent phrases are habitually used by Government in their formal announcements, so often that they are presumably much to authority's taste. In the receptive ear, at their utterance, seems faintly audible an easy smacking of remote official lips. But such phrases' psychological effect on those to whom they are addressed is not, after all, unimportant. They may cumulatively annoy.

Necessarily the adjective "due" is question-begging. It assumes that Government alone is proper judge of the "dueness." The public, however, may feel qualified to form an opinion of its own on this. To declare repeatedly that This and That will ensue "in due course" implies a claim to superior wisdom perhaps non-existent. These are sceptical days; the world would not be in its present mess were it true that exalted personages and departments always know best.

In this country sometimes, as elsewhere, the characteristic question-begging phrases, when closely inspected, seem to mean no more than "at officialdom's convenience, not the public's."

When feeling not easily somnolent nor assured but rattled, authority is also wont to resort to the conveniently indefinite epithet "due." But on such strenuous occasions it is employed negatively. "No undue anxiety," the public are solemnly adjured, must be felt by them. On the less critically-minded, the phrase's effect may temporarily (from exhorting officialdom's view-point) be good. Deftly and not too often administered, it undeniably acts on the feebler sort of patients as a sound narcotic. But in more lively brains it is apt to raise a disquieting and persistent query. What precise measure of anxiety, in the crisis specified, is in authority's opinion undue and due? That some may properly be felt is evidently admitted by the formal communiques or Press Notes: but] how much? Officialdom in reply seldom offers any usable criterion. If pressed for a clear answer, it may indeed retreat rapidly backwards like the squid, emitting (to foil the more pertinacious pursuers) a thick smoke-screen of inky generalities.

"Undue anxiety" cannot much irritate. As characteristically employed at moments of stress it even has a mildly endearing silliness. Yes, it seems to say, we High-Ups are in rather a fuss, like you; what exactly may happen next we cannot imagine; but let us all keep as bright as possible. But "due course" or "due consideration" are more noxious in their cumulative effect. They have so smug a savour. Yours' not to reason why....they seem by implication to assert to a vulgarly inquisitive public. Within a week lately the words appeared in at least two announcements on subjects of urgent popular interest. One related to rice. Shipping-space to bring this from Burma to India is at present deficient, and after commenting last Thursday on the serious problems this raises, the New Delhi authorities blandly remarked that supplies more in accordance with normal shipments will be available "in due course." Also "in due course," according to a statement issued on their behalf three days earlier, will be formulated and transmitted to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce their considered views on Lord Stamp's appeal for economic "belt tightening" throughout the Empire as well as in the U. K.

That important appeal was issued last November, and has a direct, if, at present, uncertain, bearing on the ordinary man's conduct of life in India during war-time. The responsibly-minded public's deep and sincere interest in it was reflected by the recent lively controversy in our columns about a "new frugality." Both the rice and the belt-tightening problems are obviously very difficult. Perhaps for the authorities yet to make up their minds on them and to give the public a clear lead, is under present conditions impossible. But failure to do so does not justify a suggestion of complacency or sluggish vagueness. Not long ago Mr. Churchill appealed for abolition of futile jargon from official literature. At what date decisions on Lord Stamp's appeal may be "due" from authority here is a subject upon which opinions at present may perhaps genuinely and widely differ. But there can hardly be difference on one point; rationing of luxury-imports may or may not be needed, but rationing in official use of the words "due" and "undue" is. That at least is due to the public.

Simplicity.

ONE Government has set a good example by advising the public that it would be no breach of etiquette if they dispensed with useless formalities in their correspondence with its officials. "The Hon" need no longer be appended to certain names as a permanent and invariable epithet; other honorifics and titles may also presumably be dropped. This pursuit of simplicity involves no disrespect; its one object is to free official correspondence from those superfluities which are an impediment to the quick dispatch of business.

The formula with which most official correspondence used at one time to end, viz., "I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient servant" and which is still sometimes used is cumbersome in its formality and amusing in its insincerity. Readers of letters in which this formula occurs seldom pay attention to it. All it does is to waste half an inch or more of space and to give needless trouble to printers and typists. "Yours

truly, faithfully, sincerely," which occur in correspondence that is not completely or strictly official is also regarded by some as a piece of superfluity. Is it not possible, some have asked, to end a letter with the signature of the correspondent's name without the intervention of any formula ?

There are people who mistake brevity for curtness and have no patience with the informal and straightforward style practised in correspondence that deliberately excludes frills. They see a slight where none has been meant ; and delight in discoursing on the punctilios of etiquette without attending to the substance of the communications that reach them. The files in many Government offices would disclose acrimonious debates on real or fancied lapses.

Dropping honorifics is not however the only way to lighten correspondence, official and other of much that is superfluous. Officialese with all its accumulated verbiage demands greater and more sustained attention from reformers. Ridicule has so far failed to alter or destroy it; the reason is that many officials believe that the diction and style they are trained to use carry with them not only a measure of dignity but a kind of legal

protection. That is not a well-founded view; unfortunately, however, it cannot disappear unless the official world itself assists in removing it. But if officialese, some day reduces itself to the smallest proportions, there would still remain a problem of technique requiring an almost equal amount of attention. Official correspondence often involves a tremendous amount of 'noting and the poling up of memoranda which it should not be difficult to reduce. A conversation across a desk may often do away with hours and days of correspondence. Under the stress of war men's minds are turning towards simplicity; and frills everywhere are coming under severe scrutiny. Simplicity and economy are only methods and no more; the end is quickness and efficiency. The test of all these methods of economy is whether that end is attained. Some may forget the end while vigorously pursuing the means.

Verbiage.

THERE is shortage of paper. Officials, here and in Britain, are urged to use less of it. Advertisements paid for by Government emphasize the public's duty too; paper-economy, they say, will quicken victory. The shortage moreover intensifies. Newspapers use as raw material a special sort of paper. This owing to dearth of shipping becomes difficult to get. Rationed already in their consumption of it, they will soon in India be rationed more. Restriction in some form is unavoidable. But it means that news-space has enhanced value. It must not be wasted. Yet wasted it often is, through Government's own unwitting fault.

Soon after he became Premier, Mr. Churchill ordered Whitehall officials to write shorter notes. Brevity, not circumlocution, was among the things needed of them if the war was to be won. And his exhortation had effect, though perhaps less than he wished. In India however it seems so far as the public can judge, to be little remem-

bered. Governmental communiques and speeches and Press Notes can seldom be called terse. Prolixity is their characteristic: some are almost strangled in their own worthless wordage. Subeditors are not encouraged to shorten them: to do so in any case needs time, of which little may exist.

Here is an example. It is from a Provincial Government Press Note. Press Notes are not legal notifications, and need not echo the law's complex phrasing. In announcing their recent assumption of extra powers to deal with meetings, the authorities concerned lately wrote:

“Both the Government and the public generally have been impressed with the desirability of avoiding acute communal controversy in the present circumstances. It is, therefore, desired to discourage the holding of political or other meetings likely to exacerbate communal feelings or to have an adverse effect on the morale of the people or the war effort of the Province....” The new powers were then described, and the Press Note concluded:.... “It is not expected that these powers will have to be used frequently, if at all, but the Government consider it desirable that the public should be aware that such powers do

exist." These are 92 words ; 39 or fewer might have sufficed to convey the meaning, thus:

"In these times most people wish communal controversy to be avoided. Government means to discourage meetings which might arouse such controversy or upset morale. Perhaps these powers will not be used but the public should know that they exist."

That provincial Government is no lone sinner. Specimens of wasteful verbiage could be extracted almost daily from official publications elsewhere. Nor are Governments the only word-wasters. Politicians and publicists, commercial magnates, and newspapers themselves often use two terms where one would do, or the longer of two available epithets. In periods of pressure such as these, precision of thought and phrase cannot fairly be expected always. Nevertheless, Administrations in India, in their own interest, and those of public and Press, would do well now-a-days to remember Mr. Churchill's valuation of brevity.

A Lost Verb.

IN a letter to the London "Spectator" some time ago the writer asked what had happened to the good old English word 'begin.' Nothing ever begins in these days, he complained. It starts. "He started to think. The Germans started to arrive. The fire started to burn." The opening sentence of a modern edition of the Bible would, he thought, be "At the start God created the heaven."

There was another phase when commonplace English tried to get away from "begin," feeling it to be ordinary and colourless. "Commence" was then the stand-by. Everything commenced. "It commenced to rain, the game commenced with the Mayor kicking off, at the commencement of the road was a letter-box," and so on. Fowler's *Modern English Usage* comments on the phenomenon, and observes that "commence" retains more than "begin" the positive sense of initiative or intention; also that "begin" not "commence" is even in formal style the

right word before an infinitive. Yet, "commence" has established itself in some degree. Men begin to fight, and some writers are capable of saying that they begin to leave off, but in official language hostilities always commence.

Neither start nor commence is Biblical. The great forty-seven who working on Wycliffe and Tyndal gave us the Authorized Version found "begin" enough for their needs, whether they used it of God or man or nature. A vague feeling has developed that "begin" is all right for the ordinary man of common clay but not for one who has had the benefits of a high school education. It is something like the subtle difference between "please sit down" which does for the house and "please take (or resume) your seats" which is felt to be demanded in a public meeting. Students of the ways of words may have noticed many changes consequent on the abnormality of these times. There is a constant straining after emphasis to accord with facts which often are emphatic. Aeroplanes for example never simply go anywhere when a battle is on. They tear or roar wherever they are wanted. Nor do they drop bombs. They plaster the targets with them. It calls for effort to use ordinary, quite homely,

language in a world that has for the time suspended ordinary, quiet, homely behaviour. When the world, starts (or commences) to be quiet again we may be able to begin to feel at home once more with the word "begin."

Officialese.

THE case against officialese is well known and has often been urged in these columns. It is a jargon and therefore an enemy of normal English ; it works with an inelastic vocabulary ; it encourages formality, stiffness and even pomposity in those who write it as well as in those who read little else. It has set phrases, pet circumlocutions, expressions which it is high treason in the official world to vary. For style it has no patience ; for eloquence no scope. Not persuasion but the enforcement of an attitude, a point of view, a decision, an order, is its one aim. Easy to learn, hard to unlearn, it lives apart and frowns on purists no less than innovators ; nor is it grateful towards those who try to teach it from time to time a less cumbrous manner of self-expression.

These charges have been proved against officialese ; and the punishment it has had at the hands of all practitioners of style has been,

by common consent, heavy. Exalted segregation is its lot. The curse of immortality lies on it ; and it shall for ever live away from the plains in which normal English dwells. But in segregation, might it not be a bigger menace than when it roamed about in virtual freedom, with but few restrictions on its movement ? Perhaps its neighbourhood is not as dangerous as it seems. For may it not, by inducing perpetual vigilance in all who come in contact with it, assist those who endeavour assiduously to keep the well of English undefiled ? And awkward and soulless, as by general agreement it is, may it not reveal, on careful scrutiny, something that would earn it a periodical lightening of its heavy doom ?

To suspect officialese and yet to learn from it a thing or two may be wisdom for more than one user of language. Legal precision may be overdone and is often out of place ; but precision is undoubtedly a virtue. Reserve and reticence may not make for popularity ; but they are sometimes a necessity. Economy of expression is often dearly bought ; may there not be need, at times, for repetition, periphrasis and an abundance of qualifying expressions ? Officialese was, in origin, certainly a reaction from the

crudities and excesses of democratic speech. The reaction from it may well lead to another extreme as undesirable. Far-seeing men will shun both extremes.

Bad Language.

MR. A. P. HERBERT has had another good fling at those, especially the King's Government, who behave brutally and wantonly towards the Kings's English. That language can say fine strong things in few and slender words, and he names one or two, Mr. Churchill and Sir John Simon, who never forget that, who can say what they want to say in words that make the hearer sit up and jerk out "My hat; this means something." But good men of that sort are few. So English gets stuffed like bolsters with words that are like feathers, ineffective and stifling.

New situations bring new words into use. And Government departments, Mr. Herbert thinks, make the worst of the opportunities presented to them. One modern abomination is "evacuation," with "evacuee." To evacuate is by every principle of philology and linguistics to make empty. But that was not what the Government of England did when it moved the school children from some places to others. It moved

them, scattered them (why not "a scattering," asks A. P. H. in his broadcast). It gave them food for two days and provided for their maintenance. It did not try to empty them. Then again, he asked his hearers to look at words like contamination, decontamination; he himself had shuddered at redecontamination. Yet English has to "clean" or "cleanse." What is wrong with them?

Fat Latin words bulging like bolsters, phrases flabby like feathers, that was how he described weak, ineffective, pretentious language that may be dangerous. What exactly do we do when we "co-ordinate our economic possibilities" and agree to "mutual bilateral non-aggression?" Government departments cannot say what they want to in language that the ordinary man can listen to with pleasure. "Rat" is a good little word, and to get rid of rats is a public service. Men have done this with dogs and ferrets for generations, and found no need for sesquipedalian, six-foot, words. Of late Government has directed the process. No longer do men wage war on rats. Instead they engage in deratizations and for this purpose organize deratization squads.

To guard against these evils needs constant vigilance, for in nothing are we more susceptible to our environment than in the use of words. Words and phrases become conventional and habitual. No minister of recent years has given a legislature an assurance about anything for an assurance by itself looks naked ; it is only decent and impressive when it is a definite assurance. Similarly an understanding must be a clear and distinct understanding. The one bit of hope in all this is that a bad habit is occasionally forgotten. Some years ago every blunder in India was Himalayan. And now ministers are frequently told that they have blundered *tout court*.

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Gender and Number.

IT is a common habit, and one frequently denounced by political theorists and historians, to refer to nations as if they were human beings. Every day we read that "Britain is calm," "America justifiably indignant," "Russia has given another display of ruthless brutality" and so forth. Purists are frequently driven to point out that not all Englishmen possess that *sangfroid* attributed to the race in general ; that far more Americans are interested in the local ball game than in the antics of dictators ; and that there are a few Russians engaged in other pursuits than liquidating Trotskyists. Nor does the aforesaid purist consider this a venial error ; on the contrary it is in his opinion responsible for serious mistakes in assessing foreign opinion.

Here, however, we are less concerned with the effects upon economics, politics and history than upon simple grammar. For the anthropomorphic view of nations possesses all the difficulties of any analogy, principally the question how

far it is to be pushed. If "Britain" is to be regarded as a single entity, what is the nature and gender of that entity? To judge by current references in the Press and elsewhere there is little unanimity on the point. Sometimes Britain is referred to as "she," at other times as "it." With the United States there is an added possibility, that a plural "they" is preferable to either; and if that be admitted, what about the Soviet Union or the Commonwealth of Australia, also Federated States?

For the foreigner such difficulties do not normally arise, as the gender and number of a country is usually fixed for him by the established conventions of his language. Yet this fixing is in most cases entirely arbitrary. Why, in French, should Canada be masculine, Germany feminine and India plural? In German there is greater uniformity, for the names of most countries are, very sensibly, allotted to the neuter gender. Not all, however, and it is even possible for a country to change its gender as is shown with Austria, *das Oesterreich* having recently become *die Oestmark*.

There is perhaps a tendency among writers to suit the gender of a country to the character-

istics attributed to it in the discussion. To a patriotic Frenchman, his country is inevitably feminine, Marianne, the object of his entire devotion, while a place like Peru, in which he has little interest, can be relegated to the inferior male sex. When discussing the Soviet invasion of Finland few would dispute that the neuter gender is that most applicable to the Soviet Union; for to both its detractors and its partisans the Soviet Union is an entirely impersonal force, to the former a mere engine of destruction, to the latter a process in history. Yet on even this point there is no unanimity. Fickleness is traditionally supposed to be a feminine characteristic; but, when the French wish to refer to England as fickle, they abandon the feminine *Angleterre* for the masculine *perfide Albion*. In much the same way the Romans unexpectedly went into the neuter, talking of feminine *varium et mutabile*, woman, fickle and inconstant;

Another possibility exists of introducing uniformity into diverse practice, that is, to use for a country the person, gender and number of its effective ruler. On this showing both President Roosevelt and Mr. John D. Rockefeller would doubtless refer to the United States as "I"; Great

Britain would be called "he" "she" "it" or "they," according as the writer assumed that its ruler was Mr. Chamberlain, Lady Astor, the Bank of England or some amorphous collection called "the capitalists." We are not rash enough to give similar instances for India, but doubtless they will occur to the reader.

Inevitably such procedure is open to abuse. It will be remembered that three tailors of Tooley Street once confidently headed a petition "we the people of England," nor, as we recently ventured to point out, is there any well-defined set of persons which can be laid to represent India. To achieve uniformity is almost certainly a hopeless task. The method suggested, however, might provide a guide to variety more intelligible than the mere caprice of a harassed newspaper man.

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